

THE ADMINISTRATION'S PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

(117-10)

REMOTE HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 25, 2021

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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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MARCH 22, 2021

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
FROM: Staff, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
RE: Full Committee Hearing on “The Administration’s Priorities for Transportation Infrastructure”

PURPOSE

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will meet on Thursday, March 25, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. EDT in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Cisco Webex to hold a hearing titled “The Administration’s Priorities for Transportation Infrastructure.” The hearing will provide an opportunity for Members of the Committee to probe the Administration’s priorities for infrastructure investment, transportation policy, surface transportation authorization, and other matters. The Committee will hear testimony from the United States Department of Transportation (DOT).

BACKGROUND

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure authorizes programs carried out by the following DOT modal administrations and offices:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Maritime Administration (MARAD)
- Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
- Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)
- Office of the Secretary (OST)

On December 15, 2020, President Biden nominated Pete Buttigieg to be Secretary of Transportation. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a confirmation hearing on the nomination on January 21, 2021. The Senate confirmed Secretary Buttigieg on February 2, 2021, by a vote of 86–13.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS

America’s infrastructure network is essential for quality of life, for supporting the economy, and for creating family-supporting jobs. In order to retain the benefits of our transportation infrastructure network, investment must keep up with needs. The current costs of our infrastructure needs are staggering. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the country’s total infrastructure needs over

the next 10 years total nearly \$6 trillion, and the funding gap to meet those needs is \$2.59 trillion.¹ ASCE graded the nation’s infrastructure as a “C-.”²

In the coming decades, the nation’s infrastructure will continue to face significant strain. America’s population is expected to grow to more than 400 million by 2060.³ Freight movements are expected to increase 40 percent by 2045.⁴ At the same time, much of our infrastructure needs to be modernized and upgraded to meet current and future needs; to account for the needs of all impacted communities; to take advantage of new technologies and innovative mobility solutions to move people and goods more safely, efficiently, and equitably; to reduce carbon pollution; and to build stronger, more resilient, and adaptive transportation networks.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION

The authorization for highway, transit, rail, and safety programs expires on September 30, 2021. The Committee is working to enact a multi-year surface authorization bill in advance of this deadline.

Last Congress, on July 1, 2020, the House of Representatives passed, by a vote of 233–188, H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which would reauthorize surface transportation programs through September 30, 2025. The Senate did not take up H.R. 2.

Since 1995, multi-year surface transportation authorization bills enacted by Congress include: the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) (P.L. 105–178) enacted in 1998, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA–LU) (P.L. 109–59) enacted in 2005, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP–21) (P.L. 112–141) enacted in 2012, and the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) (P.L. 114–94), enacted in 2015. On October 1, 2020, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116–159) was enacted, which included a one-year extension of the FAST Act.

AVIATION PROGRAMS

While current FAA and DOT aviation programs are not set to expire until October 1, 2023, Secretary Buttigieg will need to monitor the implementation of significant aviation legislation enacted in recent years, ensuring legislative mandates are implemented expeditiously and in accordance with Congressional intent.

First, on October 5, 2018, President Trump signed into law the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115–254), a five-year reauthorization of FAA and DOT aviation programs. The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 contains more than 400 mandates for the FAA and the DOT to issue regulations, prepare reports to Congress, and conduct studies in the fields of aviation safety, airport infrastructure, agency management, and aviation consumer protections. The FAA has yet to fully implement several key provisions included in the 2018 law, including mandates that the FAA: require flight attendants receive a minimum of 10 hours’ rest between flight duty periods; require the installation of a secondary cockpit barrier on each new aircraft that is manufactured for delivery to a passenger air carrier; complete a call to action on airline engine safety and report to Congress on the results; and disburse aviation workforce program grants to develop the next generation of U.S. aviation workers.

Second, on December 27, 2020, following the conclusion of multiple reviews and investigations into the FAA’s certification of the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, which crashed twice in five months, killing 346 people, Congress enacted comprehensive aviation certification legislation—the Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act—as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Div. V, P.L. 116–260). The Act reforms and strengthens the FAA’s aircraft certification process; ensures transparency, accountability, and integrity in FAA regulation of U.S. aircraft manufacturers; addresses issues identified in various reviews and investigations related to human factors, automation in the cockpit, and international pilot training; and authorizes nearly \$275 million over five years in robust FAA oversight and aviation safety-improving programs and initiatives. The FAA is in the very early stages of implementing this critical aviation safety law.

¹American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), “Infrastructure Report Card,” 2021. <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/>. Accessed March 16, 2021.

²*Id.*

³U.S. Census Bureau, “Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060,” February 2020.

⁴U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, “DOT Releases 30-Year Freight Projections,” 2016.

WITNESS LIST

- The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, United States Department of Transportation

THE ADMINISTRATION'S PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
WASHINGTON, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:01 a.m., in room 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Cisco Webex, Hon. Peter A. DeFazio (Chair of the committee) presiding.

Present in person: Mr. DeFazio and Ms. Norton.

Present remotely: Ms. Johnson of Texas, Mr. Larsen, Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Sires, Mr. Garamendi, Mr. Johnson of Georgia, Mr. Carson, Ms. Titus, Mr. Maloney, Mr. Huffman, Ms. Brownley, Ms. Wilson of Florida, Mr. Payne, Mr. Lowenthal, Mr. DeSaulnier, Mr. Carbajal, Mr. Brown, Mr. Malinowski, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Davids, Mr. García of Illinois, Mr. Delgado, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Auchincloss, Ms. Bourdeaux, Mr. Kahele, Ms. Strickland, Ms. Williams of Georgia, Ms. Newman, Mr. Graves of Missouri, Mr. Young, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Webster, Mr. Massie, Mr. Perry, Mr. Rodney Davis, Mr. Katko, Dr. Babin, Mr. Graves of Louisiana, Mr. Rouzer, Mr. Bost, Mr. Weber, Mr. LaMalfa, Mr. Mast, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Miss González-Colón, Mr. Balderson, Mr. Burchett, Mr. Johnson of South Dakota, Dr. Van Drew, Mr. Guest, Mr. Nehls, Ms. Mace, Ms. Malliotakis, Ms. Van Duyne, and Mrs. Steel.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I call the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to order. I ask unanimous consent that the chair be authorized to declare a recess at any time during today's hearing. Without objection, so ordered.

It is the responsibility of each Member seeking recognition to unmute their microphone prior to speaking. Keep your microphone muted, please, when not speaking, to avoid inadvertent background noise. And as you know, I will be thumping on the gavel if you do. If you have technical problems, let me know. And you know how to insert a document into the record.

So we had hoped that we would kick off this year with the Secretary, but given the length of time for confirmation and all that, the committee couldn't wait. But I am pleased that the Secretary is here today. I think it is his first substantive appearance before Congress absent his Senate interrogation. We are here today to talk about a 21st-century infrastructure plan, Rebuilding the Nation's—hello. Someone is not muted. Mute. Are you going to get it together now? It is not too hard. We have done this enough times. You ought to be able to figure it out.

In any case, there is obviously very broad agreement that the American public needs and wants—American business and individuals—the Nation’s crumbling infrastructure to be rebuilt. They are tired of potholes, they are tired of detours, failed bridges, congestion, and all the problems. They are tired of water mains that blow up, and sewer systems that back up into their homes. We can do this. We did it in a great way in the middle to the later part of the last century, and America can do it again. But we are going to rebuild it in a way that is going to be resilient to severe weather events, be resilient—will you please mute your microphones. It is not too hard. I think maybe there is a way we can just shut you down.

OK. We are going to rebuild it in a way that is resilient to climate change. That means extreme weather events, sea level rise. We are also going to build resilient to other threats, earthquakes in the West, in particular, even now, fires. But the bill, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers, is about \$2.6 trillion over 10 years. Last year, we passed a bill out of this committee that was \$500 billion, give or take, and given the magnitude of the problem, it is a good start, but there were those who said that was too much. It isn’t too much. And I will look forward to hearing in the near future, hopefully from the Biden administration, on what sort of numbers they want to set.

We are going to have the most robust Buy America standards in the entire Government. Actually, transportation already is the most robust, but we are going to plug the final loopholes. We are going to get rid of the predatory Chinese rail company, and the bus company, which is substantially subsidized by the Communist government of China. The rail company is wholly owned by the Communist government of China.

We are going to move. We are not going to do Eisenhower 8.0. The Eisenhower plan was great for its time. It knitted the country together. We have got to rebuild that, but we also have to have an eye on the 21st century and the challenges of the 21st century as we rebuild it.

So, the bill we passed last year is a starting point, in my opinion, for this year’s legislation. It was transformational. It focused on investing in outcomes that are possible under a new vision. We had testimony just last week from the Virginia DOT, which is dealing with severe congestion. And they said, well, we could do two more lanes on I-395, and in 10 years, it would be just as congested as it is today. That costs about \$12 billion; or we can provide a very viable, frequent, convenient rail option, which is expensive—it is going to be close to \$5 or \$6 billion. So it’s half the cost, a solution that gets people out of traffic, a solution that mitigates fossil fuel pollution—that is the kind of thing we want DOTs to start looking at, not just the same old tired solutions. You can’t add infinitely more lane-miles in many areas of this country, and that is not what this is going to be about.

We are going to make it safer, more equitable, cleaner, with less carbon pollution. We are going to have well-trained, well-paid workers. And we are going to reach out to many people that have been left behind and offer them training opportunities, partnering both in our bill but with other committees. We are going to deal

with underserved communities whose voices have not been heard and needs have frequently not been met, and we are going to try and undo some of the damage of the past that targeted those communities.

We are going to have transportation systems planned around what matters to people—that is, greater and easier access to jobs and essential services, more efficient mobility utilizing innovation, safe, resilient, in good repair.

These are not aspirational. These are all achievable, and, Mr. Secretary, I know you share my commitment to this vision. I believe that many of these things are incorporated in the Building Back Better plan, and also the plan you yourself offered as a Presidential candidate. We are going to provide greater local decision-making.

As a mayor, you know that often people at the local level, Members of Congress, mayors, and others, know better than the bureaucrats in the State capital, or, no offense, or the people in the Washington, DC, Secretary's Office at the Department of Transportation.

We are going to look to address those concerns better in this bill. As I said, Members are going to have a transparent and equitable process to do direct investments in their community. And, then, there are other issues, certainly beyond surface transportation, wastewater, harbors, everything under our jurisdiction, under your jurisdiction, and aviation. Aviation always seems to be kind of a work in progress.

Last Congress, we had a great bipartisan bill that re-regulated the way that we certify aircraft in response to the tragedies with the Boeing MAX, and I am going to be tracking closely and want to see that certification implemented as comprehensively and as quickly as possible.

We also have issues pending from the FAA bill, the last FAA bill which was about 3 years ago now, and I think I was told—in fact, I know I was told that this month we would hear about secondary barriers on aircraft and, of course, the long, languishing, delayed rule on flight attendant duty rest time.

And then, finally, the Obama administration, with misplaced priorities, certified something called Norwegian Air International. It was actually a scam. It had nothing to do with Norway except the investment, because they were incorporating in Ireland so they could get around labor laws. They could hire contract crew from Asia to fly the planes, and avoid the stricter labor laws of Norway.

And, now, I understand that it went bankrupt, thankfully, but now they are attempting to come back as something called Norse Atlantic, and I would hope that your Department will thoroughly study that application. And I believe that it will be found not to meet the requirements of fair skies and labor agreements, and it should not be authorized.

So with that, Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us today. We are eager to hear from you how best we can work together with you, President Biden, and Vice President Harris on our shared goals and moving America forward.

[Mr. DeFazio's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Peter A. DeFazio, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, and Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Today, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee kicks into high gear our work to advance surface transportation authorization and infrastructure investment. We had planned to host the Secretary for our first hearing of the 117th Congress—because getting this monumental effort across the finish line is this Committee’s top legislative priority.

We have no time to waste. The American people—who rely on our roads, bridges, bike lanes, transit systems, railroads, airports, and waterways for their mobility and for their livelihoods—cannot wait. Infrastructure is integral to the functioning of our economy and investing heavily in it at this moment in time is key to our nation’s recovery.

We *know* our infrastructure needs are massive: the American Society of Civil Engineers’ (ASCE) latest report documents an investment gap of \$2.6 trillion over the next 10 years to fix what we have, meet future needs, and restore America’s competitiveness. We *know* the question is not whether we need to invest, but what consequences we’ll suffer for every day of delay as the risk of failure of our aging and fragile assets increases.

We *know* the dramatic impact that federal transportation and infrastructure investments have in creating and sustaining good family-wage jobs that can’t be outsourced. And how these investments support American manufacturing through the robust Buy America standards in the programs this Committee authorizes.

And we *know* that in this pivotal time, it’s not just how much we invest, but how we invest these funds that will determine whether an infrastructure bill moves our nation in the right direction. It is time to reimagine how we plan and build transportation projects, and put our money behind achieving a new vision. As I’ve said many times, we have to move beyond Eisenhower 7.0.

That is why, last Congress, this Committee advanced H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which provided record levels of investment—\$500 billion—in surface transportation programs. This transformational bill focused on investing in the *outcomes* that are possible under a new vision:

- a safer, more equitable transportation network for all users,
- a cleaner transportation footprint and less carbon pollution,
- well-trained and well-paid workers who are ready for new technologies,
- underserved communities whose voices are heard and whose needs are met,
- transportation systems planned around what truly matters to people—greater and easier access to jobs and essential services,
- more efficient mobility utilizing innovation, and
- safe, resilient assets—in good repair—that are built to last.

These are not aspirational principles. These are real policy changes and real shifts in how we invest that are woven throughout H.R. 2.

Mr. Secretary, I know you share my commitment to this vision. Many of these principles overlap with the administration’s Build Back Better plan.

But you also know first-hand as a former mayor how vital seamless mobility and well-functioning transportation systems are to quality of life in cities and towns across America. Moving people and goods safely and efficiently is the whole point of good transportation policy.

Transforming federal transportation funding to provide greater local decision-making, and ensuring communities of all sizes receive a guaranteed portion of funding under the bill, was a central theme of H.R. 2. Local elected officials know the granular needs of their communities better than anyone in the state capitols or in federal agencies.

This Congress, Members are going to have even greater opportunities to shape investments flowing to their local communities as this Committee will collect requests for projects. Through a transparent, equitable process, Members of Congress can help direct investments to elevate the greatest needs of their districts and boost local control. I am pleased that my Republican colleagues are joining in this effort.

Finally, while I have mostly focused on transportation investments on the ground, developments in the skies also require your attention. At the end of 2016, the outgoing administration imprudently issued a foreign air carrier permit to Norwegian Air International—an airline that was “Norwegian” in name only and established itself in Ireland under a flag of convenience to avoid Norway’s strong labor protections. Norwegian is bankrupt, and its U.S. services have ceased, but its founder is forming a new carrier that will likely seek a permit—Norse Atlantic—and it is imperative that you correct the error of 2016 and deny this airline’s application.

I also urge you to pay close attention to the Federal Aviation Administration's implementation of the bipartisan aircraft certification reform bill, which was enacted in December in response to two deadly Boeing 737 MAX accidents and the findings of this Committee's investigation and the recommendations of other impartial panels, including the National Transportation Safety Board.

On the subject of open mandates, I urge you to expedite action on numerous unfulfilled mandates from the 2018 Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization: (1) the requirement for secondary cockpit barriers, and (2) the mandate for a final rule to address fatigue among flight attendants, among many others. And then there's the mandate from the 2016 Federal Aviation Administration authorization extension bill, requiring a final rule on drug and alcohol testing of workers at foreign repair stations. It, too, remains open.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us today. We are eager to hear how we can best work together with you, President Biden, and Vice President Harris, on achieving our shared goals and moving America forward.

Mr. DEFAZIO. With that, I recognize my ranking member, Sam Graves.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. Your appearance in the committee is obviously very timely, and we do appreciate you appearing before us.

Infrastructure means a lot of different things to a lot of different people, but to myself and to my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, it is about the highway bill. And a bipartisan highway bill that improves our infrastructure, that creates jobs, and strengthens the U.S. economy should be the top priority for this committee.

And I have always said that it is partnership and not partisanship that gets results. You and I have discussed, on a couple of occasions, the path to a bipartisan bill, at least the way I see it, needs to meet a few key targets. I don't think the bill can grow into a multitrillion-dollar catchall. It needs to be manageable and responsible. We need to ensure equity between the rural and urban areas, which is a major concern that I have with the reconciliation bill, besides the process itself, was how little attention rural America received.

And, finally, a transportation bill I think needs to be a transportation bill, not a Green New Deal. It needs to be about roads and bridges. And I hope that as this committee works on our next major bill, that we remember to prioritize transportation infrastructure and that we don't reduce our core programs—roads, bridges, ports, airports, and rail. We don't reduce those to an afterthought.

And there are ways that we can work together to reduce transportation emissions and protect our environment, but this committee's focus should be on transportation.

We also need to invest taxpayers' money wisely where it helps them the most. After providing unprecedented levels of COVID-related relief this past year, we need to carefully consider what goes into a transportation package. The more massive any bill becomes, the more bipartisanship suffers, and I want to stress that we are ready to partner with you in making critical investments and strengthening our transportation system.

While a transportation bill is among the most important things that this committee does, it is not the only thing, as was pointed out by Chairman DeFazio.

So, I want to highlight a couple of key issues before the Department of Transportation, that are at least at the top of my list. And one is preserving the FAA's gold standard and standing internationally, and specifically when it comes to safety. The FAA is the leader in safety and certification. There is no question in my mind about that.

And the second thing is, ensuring that the billions of dollars that have flowed to transit agencies are shared with transit contractors who have worked hand-in-hand with the agencies to keep these systems operating throughout the pandemic, and all the time they retained their workers, and many of those were union employees.

There are a whole lot of other things out there that are of interest to me, but in the interest of time, I want to keep it at that, and I look forward to hearing what you have to say, and look forward to working with you. And, again, I want to thank you for being here today.

[Mr. Graves of Missouri's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Sam Graves, a Representative in Congress from the State of Missouri, and Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Thank you, Chair DeFazio, and thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, for being here today. Your appearance before our Committee is timely.

While infrastructure means different things to different people, to me and my colleagues on the Transportation Committee, it's the highway bill. And a bipartisan highway bill that improves our infrastructure, creates jobs, and strengthens the U.S. economy should be a top priority for this Committee.

Partnership—not partisanship—gets results. As you and I have discussed, the path to a bipartisan bill needs to meet a few key targets.

This bill *cannot* grow into a multitrillion-dollar catchall. It needs to be manageable and responsible.

We need to ensure equity between rural and urban areas. A major concern with the reconciliation bill—besides the process itself—was how little attention rural America received.

And finally, a transportation bill needs to be a transportation bill—not the Green New Deal. This needs to be about roads and bridges.

I hope that as this committee works on our next major bill, we remember to prioritize transportation infrastructure, and that we don't reduce our core programs—roads, bridges, ports, airports, and rails—to an afterthought. There are ways we can work together to reduce transportation emissions and protect our environment, but this Committee's focus should be *transportation*.

We also need to invest taxpayers' money wisely where it helps them the most. After providing unprecedented levels of COVID-related relief this past year, we need to carefully consider what goes into this infrastructure package. The more massive any bill becomes, the more bipartisanship suffers.

I want to stress that we are ready to partner with you in making critical investments and strengthening our transportation system.

While passing a transportation bill is among the most important things this Committee does, it is not the only thing. So, I also want to highlight a couple key issues before the Department of Transportation that are top of mind for me.

First, preserving the FAA's gold standard and standing internationally—specifically on safety. The FAA is the leader in safety and certification—without question.

Second, ensuring that the billions of dollars that have flowed to transit agencies are shared with transit contractors who have worked hand-in-hand with the agencies to keep these systems operating throughout the pandemic—all while retaining their workers, many of them union employees.

There are many more, but in the interest of time I'll keep it at that. Thank you again for being here today.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

With that, I would recognize Secretary Buttigieg. Mr. Secretary.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF
TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you very much. Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the administration's priorities for transportation infrastructure. And I am grateful for the committee's longstanding leadership on these issues, and for continuing the important conversation that we are having today.

I believe that we have, at this moment, the best chance in any of our lifetimes to make a generational investment in infrastructure that will help us meet the country's most pressing challenges of today, and create a stronger future for decades to come.

Our country is now emerging from a pandemic that has taken the lives of more than 535,000 Americans. Relief is on the way, thanks to the President's American Rescue Plan passed by Congress, but there is near universal recognition that a broader recovery will require a national commitment to fix and transform America's infrastructure.

There are good reasons why infrastructure has such strong bipartisan support. Every citizen, regardless of political affiliation, shares the need for reliable roads, railways, and air transportation. We all live with the damage that has been caused by a history of disinvestment, and the resulting unmet needs that are only growing by the day.

Across the country, we face a \$1 trillion backlog of needed repairs and improvements with hundreds of billions of dollars in good projects already in the pipeline. We see other countries pulling ahead of us, with consequences for strategic and economic competition. By some measures, China spends more on infrastructure every year than the U.S. and Europe combined. The infrastructure status quo is a threat to our collective future. We face an imperative to create resilient infrastructure and confront inequities that have devastated communities.

Right now, nearly 40,000 Americans die on our roads annually. Millions live in communities isolated, or divided, by missing or misplaced infrastructure. And millions of Americans don't have access to affordable transportation options to get around. Before the pandemic, commuting times were getting longer for average Americans while their housing and transportation costs soared. And without action, it will only get worse.

In the United States, transportation is the leading contributor to climate change, contributing to a pattern of extreme weather events, which takes a severe toll on our infrastructure. Every dollar we spend rebuilding from a climate-driven disaster is a dollar we could have spent building a more competitive, modern, and resilient transportation system that produces significantly lower emissions.

It doesn't have to be this way. Wise transportation investments are key to making the American dream accessible for all, leading our global competitors in innovation, getting people and goods where they need to be, creating good jobs—jobs that are union or pay prevailing wages—and tackling our climate crisis.

Just like those who summoned the will to build the transcontinental railroad in the 1800s and the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s, we, too, have the opportunity now to imagine and create a different future for American transportation.

I know that expectations have been raised before when it comes to major moves in American infrastructure, but now, in this season, we can turn aspirations into action.

Now is the time to create millions of good jobs—for American workers, to help communities and businesses—big and small, rural and urban—to compete and win in the global economy.

Now is the time to clear the backlog and repair our highways, roads, bridges, maritime ports, airports, and more, to enhance freight and passenger rail, and to provide accessible public transit and mobility options for all.

Now is the time to redouble our commitment to transportation reliability and safety and ensure that families will no longer have to mourn tragic deaths that could have been prevented.

Now is the time to finally address major inequities, including those caused by highways that were built through Black and Brown communities, decades of disinvestment that left small towns and rural main streets stranded, and the disproportionate pollution burden from trucks, ports, and other facilities.

Now is the time to improve the air we breathe and tackle the climate crisis by moving the U.S. to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, building a national electric vehicle charging network, and investing in transit-oriented development, sustainable aviation, and resilient infrastructure.

So taking my lead from President Biden and Vice President Harris, I stand ready to work with Members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle, to deliver an infrastructure package that meets this consequential moment and ensures a future worthy of our great Nation. I believe this is what America deserves, and this is what we can deliver if we can seize this moment together.

So, thank you again for inviting me to be here today, and I am looking forward to your questions.

[Mr. Buttigieg's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Transportation,
U.S. Department of Transportation**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Administration's priorities for transportation infrastructure. I am grateful for the committee's longstanding leadership on this issue and for continuing this important conversation at today's hearing.

I believe we have—at this moment—the best chance in any of our lifetimes to make a generational investment in infrastructure that will help us meet our country's most pressing challenges today and create a stronger future for decades to come.

Our country is now emerging from a pandemic that has taken the lives of more than 535,000 Americans. Relief is on the way thanks to the President's American Rescue Plan passed by Congress, but there is near universal recognition that a

broader recovery will require a national commitment to fix and transform America's infrastructure.

There are good reasons why infrastructure has such strong bipartisan support. Every citizen, regardless of political affiliation, shares the need for reliable roads, railways, and air transportation. We all live with the damage that has been caused by a history of disinvestment and the resulting unmet needs that are only growing by the day.

Across the country, we face a trillion-dollar backlog of needed repairs and improvements, with hundreds of billions of dollars in good projects already in the pipeline. We see other countries pulling ahead of us, with consequences for strategic and economic competition. By some measures, China spends more on infrastructure every year than the U.S. and Europe combined. The infrastructure status quo is a threat to our collective future. We face an imperative to create resilient infrastructure and confront inequities that have devastated communities.

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Taking my lead from President Biden and Vice President Harris, I stand ready to work with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to deliver an infrastructure package that meets this consequential moment and ensures a future worthy of our great nation.

This is what Americans deserve. And this is what we can deliver if we seize this moment together.

Thank you again for inviting me to be here today, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. You are off to a great start. You did it in less than 5 minutes, so we appreciate that.

So a couple of quick issues. I raised the issue of a reapplication by the new Norse Atlantic Airways. I would just like your assurance that you are not just going to adopt the standards and the

judgment of the past administration, the Obama administration. I know you can't discuss potential standing, but I just want assurance that there will be a thorough and clean-sheet review of this proposal.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Understood. As of this time, we have not yet received an application from the specific carrier you mentioned, but we are aware of the news reports of the potential future service that you described. So you have my commitment, Chairman, that we would adjudicate any foreign carrier application in accordance with our established regulatory process and with all of the relevant international agreements.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Including labor laws.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Indeed.

Mr. DEFAZIO. You have mentioned the oversight of pipeline safety on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" We passed a bipartisan bill through the committee, and it was adopted in the final package at year-end by the Senate, called the PIPES Act, which has important provisions to reduce methane leaks which, of course, are way worse than CO₂, from existing pipelines. As long as natural gas is being piped around, we don't need to unnecessarily pollute. I hope you have plans to expedite implementation of some of the new provisions we put in place.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. We have been working on implementing this new PIPES Act since passage and appreciate the leadership of Congress directing us to include environmental impacts in the rulemaking. So we have a process underway of making sure that PHMSA, the relevant modal administration, is staffed up for this. That includes hiring new attorneys, bringing on the first environmental economist, and the first agencywide NEPA expert for PHMSA.

And, we are working also to finalize rules that have been pending for a while, but are close to the finish line, so that we can prioritize those that are going to have the biggest impact.

I also just want to mention that PHMSA's website, as part of our compliance with the congressional directive, now includes monthly progress updates on the PIPES Act to make sure that there is transparency about our work and the timelines there.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Excellent. Good to hear that.

I appreciate the fact that the administration repealed the nonsensical rule on CIG grants by the previous administration that said that TIFIA loans, when an entity borrows money that they are going to have to repay with interest, that it doesn't count as a local cost share, I appreciate that you have repealed that. That was idiotic.

But they also issued changes to the risk assessment process that, according to analysis done by this committee, added \$650 million in total project costs, and done without any consultation with stakeholders. Is the administration planning to repeal the changes to the CIG risk assessment policy and save money and expedite projects?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So we are aware of this concern. I want to first just reiterate the administration's commitment to the CIG program. We know how important it has been for successfully delivering important projects.

And as you mentioned, the prior administration changed how this risk assessment calculation was conducted. So we are taking on board the concerns that stakeholder groups have raised, and the FTA is reviewing those changes so that we can have an appropriate cost estimate validation process that is reasonable and attainable when it comes to the risk standard.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Great. And then, finally, I am about to run out of time. I am going to be pretty strict on time limits today because I want to give everybody an opportunity.

We have two spectrum issues; one is ground-based, and one is based in space. The C-band for 5G from satellite can potentially interfere with radio altimeters. Unfortunately, it was auctioned, but we are going to have to be absolutely certain before it is implemented that we are not going to lose GPS and radio altimeters because someone wants to make money selling a service so people can see things more quickly on their cell phones.

And then the 5.9 gigahertz, if we are going to move forward with V2V, vehicle-to-vehicle communication, and potentially, someday, automated vehicles, any interference in the 5.9-gigahertz spectrum, which the last Secretary objected to this, the committee objected to it, the industry, you know, all the auto industry and others objected to it, but the FCC went ahead. I hope that the administration could reengage with the FCC on this issue. Both of those issues, actually.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. So if I might take those in reverse order, on the 5.9 spectrum, often known as the safety band, that is a very important priority for transportation communications and public safety. I know that in the prior administration as well, the Department communicated its concerns, and I know there has been bipartisan concern in the committee as well, and we share that concern.

So we are going to be engaging with counterparts across the administration on a way forward, and trying to establish the best way to handle and share the spectrum that is consistent with, not just the safety and communications as we know them, but where they are headed.

On the C-band, the 3.7-gigahertz spectrum, we are very concerned about the potential for harmful interference to radar altimeters which are, as you know, very important on commercial transport aircraft, general aviation aircraft, business jets, helicopters, and increasingly UAVs, so we will be working to ensure that we are having the right posture with respect to the interagency conversations and the conversation with industry with, once again, the fundamental North Star of our Department being safety.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Secretary.

I went about a minute over, Sam, so I am going to recognize you now, and you can have 6 minutes if you want.

Ranking Member Graves.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be mindful of my time as well.

Mr. Secretary, again, I appreciate you being here today. I mentioned in my opening statement about the transit contractors being able to get the COVID relief running through the FTA. Recently, DOT did upgrade its guidance, and I am hopeful that the problem

may be fixed for the time being. But I think it needs to be a priority that we continue to clarify that COVID relief funding needs to reimburse the transit contractors' payroll and operating expenses, because they preserved those jobs. In some cases, the ridership was down to 10 percent of normal ridership, and they preserved all those jobs and kept the trains running on time.

And I just hope you work with us and commit to ensuring that those contractors are allowed to access the COVID relief funds that Congress appropriated to the FTA.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. I appreciate you raising this, and as you mentioned, I believe this has increasingly been addressed. So with the FTA now able to offer, overall, more than \$69 billion in relief to transit agencies as part of the COVID response, the priority is, of course, keeping people employed, and keeping service on the street.

So there will continue to be a requirement for transit agencies to certify that they have not furloughed employees and that contracted staff have not been furloughed before they would be able to spend those relief dollars on any activities other than payroll and operation expenses. And the FTA is putting out guidance that is intended to be consistent with the congressional directive. We certainly understand how important it is to keep people employed and the role of contractors in that.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. Thank you.

The other thing I wanted to talk to you just a little bit about, too, is the way we are funding the Highway Trust Fund. Traditionally, highway infrastructure has always been paid and maintained by the users, and that has always been through a fuel tax. The unfortunate part is as we continue to see that decline over time, then we end up supplementing from other areas the shortfall.

And I was tickled to death during your Presidential campaign when you brought up funding our system of infrastructure, highway infrastructure, through VMT, which it is no secret that I am a proponent of VMT. And I am not going to go there specifically, but I hope you will work with us to ensure long-term solvency in the Highway Trust Fund by working with us, obviously, to ensure a viable user fee system. And that is one of the nice things about transportation in our arena is, we still have true trust funds throughout the system, and we want to make sure that they are viable, and that everybody that uses those systems, obviously, pays in. There is no real question here. I just want to make sure that you continue to work with us as we find ways to make sure that that is viable, and that we have money in those user fee systems.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you. I really look forward to working with you on that. As you said, we need stable, predictable, multiyear funding, and yet, both because of the difficulty in Washington adjusting the gas tax historically, and looking to the future, the changing role of gasoline and the use of cars outright, we are obviously going to need to come to more solutions if we want to preserve that users pay principle.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back so we can get done with questions.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thanks very much.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thanks.

Representative Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I need to devote my time to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise notion, because we had a very successful hearing on that in September, and there are many questions that continue to be raised. For example, personal net worth requirements have not been updated for over a decade. Now, I have been told that your Department is reviewing them. Could we know whether you intend to increase them, or why or why not, please?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you, Congresswoman, for raising this. It is my view that we have an enormous opportunity, and an imperative to ensure that the taxpayer dollars that flow through this Department go to businesses and workers who resemble this country. And we have obviously got a long way to go, and support for DBEs is a really important part of that.

With regard to the specific adjustment you are describing, I want to take that up with our Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, which I know is reviewing that right now to make sure we understand the impacts, but we will certainly do everything we can to make sure that this program, this vision, becomes more robust in the time ahead.

Ms. NORTON. I would appreciate your reporting back to the chairman what your office has found, because that is a pressing concern.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Will do.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Secretary, along the same lines, I am also troubled to learn what it takes for businesses, DBEs, to apply in multiple States. You would think that the certification used would be the same, and it is the same across the country, but in fact, it is not the same. It differs from State to State. Can you commit to developing a more streamlined process? I mean, it could be reciprocity. It could be more centralized. What can you do to make it easier for small businesses to apply across a number of States?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, it is a priority for us to make this process more user friendly. And I know that businesses that seek to engage with the Federal Government are often confronted with a dizzying array of requirements or expectations that don't always match. And I can tell you, without yet having all of the pieces in place on how we can act most swiftly to do it, I have made clear to my top team that this will be a priority. I would welcome a chance to work with you on how to harmonize the experience across States, and also just make the process less confusing or daunting for businesses that are trying to enter, sometimes, areas of doing business with the American taxpayer that are viewed as belonging to those who are already in the know. We have really got to open it up.

Ms. NORTON. Please get back to us, Mr. Secretary, on whether you are using reciprocity incentives or some kind of more centralized certification process so that we can respond at our next hearing on that issue.

Let me ask you about another significant barrier that many of the DBEs face, and that is contract size. The federally funded contracts have to be bundled together, are often bundled together. It makes it too large for small businesses to compete, forcing many

to apply as subcontractors, and precluding many to apply as prime contractors.

Now, I understand that there are Davis-Bacon concerns. Are you willing to work with us on possible ways of unbundling contracts to provide greater opportunity for small businesses to compete for Federal contracts in particular?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I am. And I would welcome working with you as well as opening a dialogue with the Small Business Administration on this. True equity in contracting means that we would see DBEs, both as subcontractors and as prime contractors working with our Department and with every Department.

Ms. NORTON. Finally, let me and you a question about one of my favorite subjects, mobility on demand, because in my district, we see increasing use of bikes and scooters.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Eleanor, if you want him to answer, you have got to let him answer because you have only got 13 seconds.

Mobility on demand, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Big fan right here in the District of taking advantage of things like the Capital Bikeshare and welcome a chance to work with you on that, too.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. The time for the gentelady has expired.

Mr. Young.

Mr. YOUNG. Can you hear me?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. You can hear me?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thanks for appearing before the Congress and the committee. As ex-chairman, I have one suggestion. I talked with the White House the other day, the Chief of Staff. My suggestion was that you let the chairman and the ranking member work together, and you be there, but let them negotiate, and let the committee negotiate, and we will come out with a good bill. Some of the things you propose, I don't necessarily agree with, and some of the things I propose, you don't necessarily agree with. There is a meeting of the minds, and transportation is the key to our economy. You can't have an economy that doesn't have a good transportation system. And that is the thing that I have always been interested in, and that includes ports. It includes short rail. It includes long rail. It includes highways. And not just the traffic of the individuals.

I was noticing during the pandemic, that a lot of the traffic decreased. In fact, there was less pollution in the air because people worked from home. I don't like that idea, but it will work. We have to start looking at our structure of our economy, and how people put in time to get things done.

You have a great job ahead of you. I am really proud of the fact that you got to be the Secretary of Transportation. I have worked with over 10 Secretaries of Transportation in my career. As chairman, I was successful with Mr. Oberstar writing a good bill. I believe Ms. Norton is the only one there when we wrote that last bill. Maybe Eddie Bernice, too.

But having said that, it goes back to what the ranking member said. We do have to fund this some way. I mean, if we write a bill that doesn't have the right funding, are we going to borrow that

money? Can we explain to the public we are borrowing on the future?

I like the trust fund. I happen to think that a user fee and mileage is very important, especially if you go forth as you are suggesting on electric cars, which I have one, by the way. They call me a greenie. The one thing we don't have is charging stations, so that is something that you can help out on.

We want to be a teammate, and I am confident we can do it. So one question. You sort of hedged around Sam's question. Does the administration or yourself have an idea how to fund this program other than borrowing, or if borrow it is, we have to make sure we know it now. So what is the answer about the funding program?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, first of all, thank you very much. And I hope that as your 11th to make a good mark here at the Department, and, certainly, recognize that we are building on a foundation of fantastic cooperation in this committee.

With regard to your specific question about pay-fors, I have heard loud and clear from Members of Congress, Republican and Democratic, that an infrastructure proposal needs to have at least a partial funding source, and I know that that is a challenging conversation. Ultimately, while there are many complicated details, there is a simple set of places we can look, user fees, general fund, or other tax sources, as Congress has done to fill gaps in the Highway Trust Fund in recent years, or borrowing. And the bulk of any proposal will amount to whatever Congress is prepared to authorize in any combination of those sources.

Again, I know the President will be speaking more to the overall vision soon, but I know that without cooperation with Congress, we would never be able to arrive at a healthy balance of how this can be, at least, partially paid for.

Mr. YOUNG. Well, I appreciate that, Mr. Secretary, and as the members of the committee, we have a responsibility—I haven't been around when Eisenhower was around. He built an interstate system, an intrastate system, and it is what has made this Nation great. The President has a chance to leave a legacy behind of a good transportation system. And I think the public is willing to pay for it if they get a transportation system. I think 10 States now that have passed it. A user fee, a higher user fee, as long as the user knows the money is going into transportation.

So, again, Mr. Secretary, I welcome you aboard. And we will see whether we give you a grade. At the end of the 4 years, I will give you a grade.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Mr. YOUNG. So God bless you all, and just work with us, work with the chairman and ranking member. The ranking member can communicate with us, and a little bit of give on each side, a little bit of take, you know, it works out a good bill. We wrote a good bill. And I never had an adverse vote against that bill in the committee, and on the floor of the House, I only lost 14 votes, so that means working together. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you very much.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you. Thanks, Don. Yes, the 2006 bill was the last best transportation bill.

Now, we move on to Ms. Johnson from Texas.

Ms. JOHNSON OF TEXAS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and the ranking member for organizing this hearing, and the visit with the Secretary. And welcome, Mr. Secretary. We are delighted that you are taking the time to visit with us.

As I mentioned before, I am a graduate of St. Mary's College of that University of Notre Dame at the South Bend of Lake Michigan, and, so, I have seen much of your leadership, and it is much appreciated.

I am the senior Texan on this committee. I was there when Mr. Young was chair and lots of other things that happened. I am delighted that I have a few Texans who join me, because Texas is a big State to work in transportation when you are alone. It is 1,100 miles long and 1,000 miles wide with ports, inland ports, interstates, and I think all of it runs through my district. The critical infrastructure and the businesses built around it is what stimulates our economy. My area, Dallas, is 29.3 percent of the Texas economy.

We have a big agenda before us, because transportation is so vitally important to Texas. In my north Texas area, where my district is basically Dallas, we have two major airlines: American Airlines and Southwest. We have Greyhound. We have a local rapid rail system. We have several general aviation airports in the area. And we have one of the largest inland ports in the area. So, we really have great need and great interest in transportation.

Very soon, we hope that Dallas would be the northern hub for our Nation's first private sector, intercity passenger high-speed rail, providing a 90-minute connection between Dallas and Houston.

Now, let me just say that right now, Dallas is closer to Oklahoma City than it is to Houston, so that would be a miracle for us. We have the largest port in the Nation in Houston, and Dallas has the largest inland port. We dominate the trade market in Texas, and perhaps even in the country, so we have great need for transportation.

When I came onto this committee 29 years ago, my goal was to get a seamless intermodal system around the metroplex in Dallas-Fort Worth. We have gone a long way, but we have got a ways to go. We have been trying to recover from COVID-19, which we are still in the midst of, and we know we must rebuild our infrastructure. Because of our distances, everybody who works drives or rides to that work. And, so, we are very, very interested in staying involved.

We have several negative consequences like pollution, dangerous streets, disinvestment, disconnected neighborhoods, and transportation systems that are not quite complete. So to put it mildly, we are working toward equitable opportunities for good transportation, and we know that you are the right leader at this right time to help us move in that direction. So thank you very much. I think my time is over.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady.

And we now move to Mr. Crawford.

Mr. Gibbs.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, for being with us today. I hope under your leadership in the Department of Transportation, you will provide for a regulatory climate that doesn't stifle innovation, and incentives to allow for the market to function. I think those are key.

And with that thought in mind, does the Department plan to continue the Non-traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology Council, which is an internal deliberative body that the Department tasked with identifying and resolving jurisdictional and regulatory gaps that may impede the deployment of new technology, such as tunneling, hyperloop, and autonomous vehicles, and other innovations?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you, Congressman. As you point out, there are a lot of innovations coming our way that are going to make such a difference in transportation technology. We are prioritizing safety, but also just making sure that these technologies can flourish.

So, I am very interested in the work of the NETT Council and will want to engage that body and make sure the Department can be an advocate and a partner for innovators and for users alike.

Mr. GIBBS. Do you have any ideas on what the Department can do [inaudible] self-sufficient operations? What kind of incentives might the Federal Government be able to do?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I think I understood—I am sorry. The audio broke up for a moment, but I think I understood you to be asking about how Federal policy could support autonomous vehicles, and that kind of technology. Correct me if I am on the wrong track.

So, I believe the biggest thing that we need to do is, of course, establish safety and establish certainty for industry. I would suggest that the policy framework in the U.S. has not really caught up with the technology platforms, or some of the things that are increasingly becoming capable. And that is a problem, both from a safety perspective and from a market perspective because a lot of other countries are developing very robust strategies for that. So we intend to pay a lot of attention to that and do everything we can within our authorities.

I just want to note that we may need to work with Congress as well on adjusting those authorities because a lot of the regulatory frameworks we work within, and the statutory frameworks we work within, simply don't contemplate self-operating vehicles or other equipment.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you for that. In 2018, Congress passed the National Timing Resilience and Security Act, which requires implementation of a terrestrial GPS backup timing signal. Do you intend to implement that act, and if so, when?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So I am aware of the congressional expectation on this, and certainly consider it very important. This is a kind of technology that is not only relevant in the transportation sector, but emergency response, timing signals, climatology studies, all of this is at stake.

So in response to the requirement in the fiscal year 2018 NDAA, and synchronizing with similar work that I know is going on with DoD and the Department of Homeland Security, the Department

conducted a GPS backup demonstration, which recommends that there be standards developed and test procedures and monitoring capabilities established, as well as to make sure that the various kinds of equipment can work with them, and that they need to be resilient and interoperable.

The transportation sector has some of the most stringent performance requirements in regard to those safety and reliability considerations, so as we pursue this, we will want to continue working with Congress and recognizing the interagency character of this kind of work.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you. You know, we have seen the surge of cargo in our ports and the shortage of containers for the container-ships and exports and imports. What can the Department do to help improve the supply and locations of these containers to ensure that these containers are more available to U.S. exporters?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So this, I think, is a part of the broader conversation about supply chain that certainly the administration is concerned about, and it is playing a real role and becoming a real issue in many dimensions of our economy. We need to make sure we have as much of a robust domestic capability as possible, and that we can identify where the limiting factor really is when you have some of these backups that we are seeing in a lot of different parts of the country.

So some of this might involve wandering a little bit outside of the lane of what the Department of Transportation does, but it is just another example of where we need to be collaborating and coordinating with other partners in the administration to make sure we have a whole-of-Government approach.

Mr. GIBBS. Thank you, Secretary. I think I am out of time, so I wish you all the best.

I yield back.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thanks very much.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. LARSEN.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Secretary, good to see you, and I welcome you back to Washington State's Second Congressional District any time.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Mr. LARSEN. Especially the San Juan Islands.

I want to actually focus my comments more on the roads, bridges, highways, transit side of things, but I do want to highlight the letter I sent to you and your office in January regarding the Aviation Subcommittee's priorities as chair of the Aviation Subcommittee. But rather than relive all that, I just want to highlight that for you.

And, then, the second thing I want to highlight in aviation, you have no need to comment, but just a reminder of the conversation we had about implementing the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Protection Act, which was part of the American Rescue Plan and highlighting that for the supply chain workers around the country.

My questions are really on, again, the roads, bridges, highways, transit side of things. In the Northwest, transportation means jobs. I do think we need a major investment in transportation infrastructure. I think it will create jobs. I think it will help economic

recovery, and will ensure the safety of our transportation system, and we can do it cleaner and greener.

We are already behind China, as you mentioned. We are behind the EU. We are behind the business sector in the United States. We aren't leading anything when it comes to using transportation as an investment in climate change. So I do think that we can use the transportation investments to catch up, and to support the business sector. We had a hearing that outlined that very clearly.

On that point, some of this stuff is big, some of this stuff is just small ball. And on one of those, I want to know how the DOT sees the role of low- and no-emission transit investment—we have got two jurisdictions here in my district who are continuing that investment—and how you see the budget, your proposal, stacking up on low- and no-emission transit?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thanks for the question. We think it is going to be very important, first of all, making sure there are more transit opportunities writ large, so that individuals don't have to always rely on individual vehicles in order to get to where they need to be. But also making sure when they do opt for transit, that the emissions profile of those buses or light rail cars or other vehicles are as low or no emission as possible. That is the intent of the Low-No Program. As you know, we recently had a cycle of that go out, and I am certainly hopeful that that will continue to enjoy robust support from Congress, because it is a crucial part, in my view, of how we can make sure that we are meeting our climate goals.

Mr. LARSEN. I want to switch to diversity and equity. It is not just a matter of diversity and equity in considering where we put transportation infrastructure, but it is also the women and men who work in the transportation workforce as well. And I want to know if you have a vision of how to connect transportation investment to helping both diversify the workforce, which is going to be necessary over time as well as tying the transportation investment into registered apprenticeships?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. I see a lot of opportunity for us to build a more diverse workforce of people at every level, from those who work in this building in the Department, and can be attracted to be involved in public service around transportation, to those who are actually on sites and doing the work on the ground. I envision more robust partnerships with labor and with industry in order to make sure that we are building that more diverse workforce. But frankly, I think we need to better model it here as a Department ourselves, knowing how much the industry and the Department recruit from one another. And that involves everything from, as you mentioned, apprenticeships and making sure those are really open to people who may not have seen themselves in those trades before, to reaching people at the youngest possible age, even reaching into middle school when they first begin to picture a future for themselves, and letting those who are underrepresented know that they are welcome and needed in the transportation sector.

Mr. LARSEN. Thanks. I will be quick with this last question, and it is about one of the bread-and-butter parts of transportation, and that is just bridge safety. We had the Skagit River Bridge fall a few years back. We got that repaired. Do you have an idea of how

much investment, relative to everything else, that the administration is going to include in bridge safety in your infrastructure package?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, we know that there is an enormous backlog when it comes to bridge maintenance. You look at the reports out of, for example, the American Society of Civil Engineers. We have got a long way to go. So, obviously, the numbers are part of what we need to shape together, but there is no question that there is a massive, demonstrated need, and we need to act on that, and this our best opportunity, I think, in a lifetime to do it.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you. We now go to Mr. Webster. Mr. Webster.

Mr. WEBSTER. Thank you, Chair, for having invited the Secretary. It is really good, Mr. Secretary. Thank you so much for coming and just being willing to listen to us. There are a lot of people, a lot of opinions, and I know they are all flying around, and I have got one, too, just like everybody else.

I know that while Federal funding is important and needed, I think that we might be able to agree that there is a bigger gap in the funding than actually is available in the Government, and one way or another, can't do it alone, the Federal Government.

So last Congress, I joined with some colleagues to introduce the Infrastructure Bank for America. This legislation would create the bank as a Government-Sponsored Enterprise, a GSE, to get private capital off the sidelines, and get it into the United States infrastructure in some way, somehow.

There are other proposals out there, Democratic and Republican, that approach it a little bit different this way or that way, but in the end, the goal is to supply more money to our infrastructure so we might go forward. And, hopefully, we can find a path forward. I know we can.

It is my belief that we have got to create a mechanism to make it easier for individuals, pension funds, and other investments to be attracted to America's infrastructure. So I would ask you: Would you please share your administration's view on infrastructure banks, and maybe more broadly, what steps the administration is taking to encourage private infrastructure investment?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you so much for raising this. And, in fairness, having listed the kind of go-to pay-fors we know of on the public side—fees, taxation, and borrowing—it would be a mistake to neglect the possibility of mobilizing private capital, too. And I think the concept of an infrastructure bank is among the attractive ideas that could help us to do that. And I think it certainly deserves to be considered as we are forming our ultimate stack of how we can get the most investment done.

In the meantime, I want to mention and highlight the private activity bond or PAB allocation authority that we do have, not on the scale, I think, of what you are suggesting in terms of an infrastructure bank, but something that has, I think, a demonstrated track record of helping to involve the private sector and helping to lower the cost of financing projects.

We have a \$15 billion capacity right now, and we have essentially reached it in terms of the popularity of the program and the interest in it. So, I would mention that as something that is already there that might be adjusted in terms of its capacity. We could also really welcome the concept of an infrastructure bank, or some other vehicle that can help us to mobilize what we know is a lot of private capital sitting on the sidelines when we have such demonstrated need across the country.

Mr. WEBSTER. Well, thank you so much for that answer, and I look forward to working with you in the future. And maybe we can come up with something that everybody could agree with and put more money into infrastructure.

I yield back.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank for your support in expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce the range anxiety. I included a provision in last year's transportation bill that would amend the Federal law from the 1950s prohibiting EV charging stations at transit park and rides and public rest areas on the highway.

My district is home to the largest transit station on the west coast called El Monte Transit Center because the transit station is next [inaudible].

Mr. DEFAZIO. Your audio just faded out, Grace. You missed about 10 seconds there. There we go.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Do you hear me now?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yes.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Do you believe the electric vehicle charging stations should be allowed at park and rides and rest areas to reduce range anxiety for highway users and incentivize electric vehicle owners to use transit?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. We will certainly take a look at that. Broadly speaking, we cannot have the kind of electrification of vehicle transportation we hope to achieve in this country if we don't have a robust charging network, and especially as the costs come down and, increasingly, there becomes no premium or even a savings for a consumer buying an electric car compared to a comparable gasoline fuel car.

The next biggest reason somebody would hesitate to adopt is that factor you mentioned, is the range anxiety where you are just not sure that there is going to be enough charging capacity between where you are and where you need to go. And it is why the President's commitment to make sure we have more charging stations, I think, is an important one. And in terms of how and where they are deployed, there are obviously a lot of different ways to approach it. But I would welcome learning more about the initiative you are describing and working together on that.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I would like to work with your staff on that, sir.

The public rest areas along the highway are heavily used by low-income and minority families who can't afford plane tickets or Amtrak [inaudible.]

Mr. DEFAZIO. If you are talking, Grace, we can't hear you. Grace, you got to keep your audio on.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Again.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yeah, keep going.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Do you believe EV charging stations at these rest areas could help pay for rest area maintenance costs?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I certainly think it is important that we have healthy revenue sources for the maintenance of these rest areas. I know there are a lot of different ways to do it, and I am certainly open in any area where there is a shortfall to looking at how we can support making sure there is healthy revenue.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, sir. And there is a provision in H.R. 2 that I authored that would help pay for the installation of protective shields in buses to prevent assault on busdrivers. If it would have passed, it would have helped COVID protection. What is the Department doing to prevent assault on transit workers?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you for raising this. Transit workers are so important to our communities, to our economy, and we rely on them. They are an example of essential workers and yet have often been mistreated, sometimes mistreated by those who are unwilling to respond to the mandates that are intended to keep both those workers and the traveling public safe. And, you know, this shouldn't have to be their job on top of everything else that they are in charge of.

So we are trying to make sure that we are backing them up. And this was part of the intent and effect of the President's Executive order, which in turn directed us to make sure that those mask mandates have clear guidance and Federal backing. And we are going to continue to do everything we can to support those workers.

And I want to use this opportunity just to call on the public to support those transit workers, where from a bus operator to someone in a subway, and for that matter flight attendants, too, who deserve respect and who are only asking people to comply with Federal guidance.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Well, I just specifically asked about the bus shields because they protect them not only against assaults but against COVID, sir. But the next item I have on—and I better hurry up. The Foothill Transit is the bus transit provider in my district and is at the forefront of installing electric buses. They put in service the first fast-charging electric buses 6 years ago, and they plan to put in service the first double-decker electric buses in the near future, made by Alexander Dennis in Indiana. And I am forwarding a letter to you by Foothill Transit inviting you to participate in the launch of these new electric vehicles. I would hope you would accept and look forward to it, sir.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thanks for the invitation. That sounds like something I would love to kick the proverbial tires on. So I hope I can get a look.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, sir.

And I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Massie?

OK. Mr. Perry?

Mr. PERRY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary. Congratulations on your confirmation. I want to talk to you about, basically, something probably a little bit uncomfortable, but I think we need to get to it, so we all understand where we stand here. Starting in 2007, you worked as a consultant for McKinsey & Company for clients including two non-profit environmentalist groups, the National Resources Defense Council and Energy Foundation. The close ties between McKinsey and the Chinese Communist Party, as you know, have been widely reported. Both the NRDC and the Energy Foundation have extensive operations in China that require approval and cooperation with the CCP. That is the Communist Party, as you know.

Now, your background raises, I think, reasonable concerns about why you have in the past and, in some cases, now, seem to be echoing the Chinese Communist Party line on the climate crisis that the West, and only the West, needs to rapidly decarbonize based on doomsday projections that have been rejected by the IPCC itself while the Chinese Communist Party continues to build out coal plants and ramp up admissions. Unfortunately, these ties to the CCP and concerns about what many see as parroting of the CCP climate messaging group is not unique to yourself, Mr. Secretary. Actually, many consider the vast majority of the Biden administration are involved in the same thing.

Your insistence and the entire Biden administration's insistence for us to transit immediately to electric vehicles, often slave-labor-built intermittent energy sources and road dyes, are blatantly against the interest of American people, and I think can easily and justifiably be described as a China-first environmental energy and transportation policy. You know, it is great when you have public transit and you want to use that, but many people want the privacy and the autonomy and the flexibility to drive their own vehicles.

Mr. Secretary, the American people, quite honestly, are fed up with anybody's China-first policy. How can you assure this committee and the American people that you and the administration that you work for truly have the best interest of the American people in mind when oftentimes actions and rhetoric seem to support what many of us feel is a genocidal regime residing in Beijing?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I appreciate the question and the chance to be abundantly clear about why it is important to confront climate change. The main reason I think it is important to confront climate change is because of the destruction of American lives, the destruction of American property, and the destruction of American jobs that will take place if we fail to meet this moment.

I am troubled by the fact that China is not rising to meet the moment at the pace that I think the world needs. But, of course, I am an American policymaker, and so my involvement is on what we, the American people, can do to make sure we are leading the world and not playing catchup when it comes to the climate imperative.

I believe that climate change is real. I believe that climate change is caused by greenhouse gases, and I recognize that the sin-

gle biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases in the United States is the transportation sector. Thankfully, that means that the transportation sector gets to be the biggest part of the solution. And when people are working on things like, well, let's say electric vehicles, I want those to be American workers. I want those to be American union workers who are earning union wages in places like my Indiana hometown, the place that grew up around the auto industry.

There is not going to be a future for our country if we don't get ahead of climate challenges that face us. I appreciate you referring to work that I did in a much more junior time in my career on energy efficiency. That report is publicly available. It was funded by a consortium of American investor-owned utilities, environmental groups like the Natural Resources Defense Council, the U.S. Government, I believe the EPA, and possibly the Department of Energy, I don't remember. It was on the subject of energy efficiency, which is something I also consider important, but it is a little bit outside of my lane here at the Department of Transportation.

If there are other views on how to make sure we can be carbon neutral by 2050 than the views you have heard from this administration, now would be a great time to get them on the table so that we can work together before it is too late.

Mr. PERRY. I appreciate your answer.

And in the remaining time, I just would urge you, look, America wants to be first at all the good things that we love. We don't want to be first if it imperils us vis-a-vis our adversary, which is the Chinese Communist Party.

And I thank you for being here today.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

I am here. Can you hear me?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Go ahead.

Mr. COHEN. Great.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for inviting the Secretary.

I guess you will be Secretary Pete?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I will always answer to that.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. You were a great candidate for President. I know you will be a great Secretary.

I have got many issues that I deal with. We have a pipeline in Memphis that is going through an African-American neighborhood on the path of least resistance. It is going over an aquifer that supplies water for the city of Memphis. And I [inaudible] by your testimony before the Senate when you talked about the historical discrimination against minority communities with highways. It also happens with pipelines. The Byhalia pipeline is a problem in our city. Complete Streets is an issue that I champion, and I know you do also. Ed Markey and I have a bill, and I look forward to working with you on that.

Memphis, unfortunately, is third in the country in pedestrian deaths, and that needs to stop. And we have got an underrides bill

that will protect people from trucks on the highways, and it needs to be implemented to make people more safe on the highways.

But another issue I have worked on that I want to deal with on this call is airplane and passenger seats and safety. I had placed with the help of Adam Kinzinger, who was my cosponsor, a bill, but the acronym is SEAT, Seat Egress in Air Travel, or the SEAT Act, into the 2018 FAA reauthorization bill. The SEAT Act directed the FAA to establish minimum seat size and distance between rows of seats, pitch, on commercial aircraft to protect the flying public. After dragging their feet for a year after this was placed in the bill, during which time I wrote and demanded action—it was really 16 months—the FAA finally conducted 12 days of evacuation testing in Oklahoma in November of 2019. That is 16 months ago to determine whether planes need new dimensions to improve passenger safety. They have not released their results in all of this time. I fear this is due to embarrassment over the results of the study or flaws in the study. And I will be clear it will show that there were defects and contradictions.

Before the FAA began its testing, I raised several issues with the administration, the previous administration, about those tests being too narrow a sample that it wasn't representative of the flying public.

I am under the impression that the FAA did not use—did not use—people over the age of 60—that is a lot of people—individuals under the age of 18, difficulty in getting in and out of planes and understanding instructions, panicking possibly, lap children, parents seated separately from their children, individuals with disabilities, service animals, carry-on baggage, individuals with wheelchairs, significantly overweight individuals, individuals whose primary language was not English. This group of people who they did not include in their study, that sounds to me like a representative sample of the people that fly on airplanes, fly on planes now: people over 60, people taking kids, people with disabilities and carry-on baggage.

Mr. Secretary, can you commit to verifying in writing if the FAA included any of those demographics in their study?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, I am aware of the authorization which required this study. And I know that the FAA conducted this research. I have requested a look at the research that has been put together so far so we can get to it to my office and understand what is going on there. And I will make sure to keep you abreast of our findings.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Cohen, you still have 1 minute. Mr. Cohen? I guess we lost Mr. Cohen. Then, we would move on to Rodney Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will gladly take Mr. Cohen's minute, if you would let me.

Mr. DEFAZIO. No. No. Just go, Rodney, go. You have got 5.

Mr. DAVIS. All right. Well, thanks anyway, sir.

Hey, Mr. Secretary, great to see you.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Same here.

Mr. DAVIS. I appreciated our conversation earlier this week also. A couple of issues I wanted to bring up. First off, as more States move to legalize recreational marijuana, I want to ensure that our

law enforcement officials have a reliable means to determine impairment. NHTSA recommended continued research into the development of a standard, but we are seeing that there are barriers currently in place across the Federal Government that limit access for researchers attempting to solve this problem.

I do appreciate Chairman DeFazio for working with me the last Congress to include language in H.R. 2 that directs the Federal Government under your leadership to examine these barriers and provide recommendations on how to increase opportunities for research. Will you commit to work with me and this committee to encourage research into a marijuana impairment standard?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I would welcome an opportunity to work with you on that. I will sound like a broken record when I say that safety is a top priority of this Department. And, obviously, as we have a lot of evolution on the legal front, we've got to make sure that we are keeping up and getting ahead of any issues that impact roadway safety.

Mr. DAVIS. Excellent. Thank you, sir. Also, a transit agency in my district, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, and many others across the country, they are utilizing hydrogen fuel cell electric bus technology as they transition their fleets to zero-emission propulsion. While I appreciate the role battery electric buses will play in our future, I want to communicate the importance of hydrogen, as Congress and the administration makes investments in zero-emission buses and also infrastructure. Can you speak to whether zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell electric buses will be a priority for the Department?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I think this is a great time to take that up. As you know, in most areas, the electric technology has been more widely adopted, but there is a lot of promise on hydrogen technology too. And we should recognize that what is right for a bus may be different in one region than another, and it is also different than personally owned cars. And so we should encourage that whatever gets us toward zero emissions in the most efficient way possible, and to the extent that hydrogen is part of that story, we would love to be working on that as well.

Mr. DAVIS. Absolutely. Thank you for that, sir.

Mr. Secretary, you and I have had discussions regarding my bill the One Federal Decision Act that streamlines the NEPA process. It is common sense and ensures our permitting process is still environmentally friendly. At the beginning of last Congress, we had Mayor Garcetti, Governor Walz, and my good friend former Secretary Ray LaHood before this committee where they discussed difficulties with the Federal permitting process.

Can you discuss your experience with the process as the mayor of South Bend, and if you will commit to working with us to put in place some commonsense reforms?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, so Federal permitting is certainly part of the life of, I think, any mayor who is seeking to improve infrastructure in their community. We have certainly experienced that in South Bend. It was especially relevant because we were contemplating something that I know is now my successor's issue, which is enhancing electric light rail or electric passenger rail right between our community and Chicago, and getting through those proc-

esses, contemplating the environmental review, can certainly be a source of complication or extend timelines or costs.

Now, of course, we also know that there is a good reason for a lot of these rules. But any time there is something duplicative in there or something can be done in a more efficient way, that can bring a lot of relief to local communities. So I do want to note that 95 percent of projects move through with a categorical exclusion. And 1 percent move through with that full environmental impact statement which is the kind that creates the most work. But that 1 percent is very important for the communities that are working on them.

And so I do see a lot of opportunity here. And I know this is an interagency conversation as well. Executive Order 13990 specifically directs OMB and CEQ to take a look at whether the replacement order ought to be issued from the One Federal Decision policy. And that is something we certainly will want to be tracking closely so that we can find ways to make sure that those Federal dollars are spent responsibly but also as efficiently and as promptly as they be can be.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you for that. I look forward to working with you on these issues. And, lastly, sir, as we spoke earlier this week, I had language included in the 2018 FAA reauthorization bill that emphasized the difference between microdrones and more traditional drones, in particular the fact that microdrones, they pose less risk in our airspace than the larger ones. I just want to know if you will commit to work with me to ensure that drone-related regulations recognize this difference and really begin to treat microdrones accordingly when it comes to pertinent and other regulations that drones are subject to.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I certainly look forward to working with you on that. We know that there is a huge range in the size and the characteristics and the flight characteristics of different kinds of drones. And as much as we reasonably can, we want to make sure that our policies and our strategies can tell the difference.

Mr. DAVIS. Great. Hey, I appreciate your time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

I will note that the FAA has not conducted the microdrone ingestion test on a jet engine yet, which I asked for almost 4 years ago, and the engineers and simulations at Virginia Tech think it will cause catastrophic failure. So we need to be careful about that.

Mr. Sires?

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome, and thank you for meeting with us today. Mr. Secretary, I represent a district in New Jersey where there is a lot of old infrastructure. We have two tunnels, two commuter tunnels that are over 100 years old. During the Sandy Superstorm, a lot of the saltwater got into these tunnels, and now the saltwater is eating the cement. I am concerned that, if we don't address this issue, it is going to be catastrophic. This corridor serves a region that is home to 17 percent of the U.S. population and 97 Fortune 500 company headquarters. The area also contributes 20 percent of the national GDP.

In my home State, the State of New York, the port authority is ready to move and work with you. So I am hopeful that we can get

some sort of a commitment from the administration to partner with us to get this done. So I was just wondering what your thoughts are on that.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you, Congressman. Yes, I share your sense of urgency about the Gateway and related projects. This is a regional issue but one of national significance because, if there were a failure in one of those tunnels, the entire U.S. economy would feel it. So I can tell you that the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration are working with New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, as well as with Amtrak and the Gateway Development Commission, to develop the next administrative draft of the environmental impact statement, which is, as we were discussing in the last question, a big part of what needs to be completed in order to get there. That means reviewing anything that might have changed since the draft EIS was issued in 2017 and coordinating with other Federal resource and regulatory agencies, like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the State agencies that might have jurisdiction.

Concurrent with what is going on on that environmental side, the FTA is working closely with project sponsors as it advances through the Capital Investment Grant Program process prescribed in law which is obviously an important part of the picture when it comes to funding. There is still a lot that has to happen there including identifying the party that will carry out environmental mitigations resolving concerns about the financial plan and demonstrating the legal, technical, and financial capacity that is required by law in order to be eligible. But I can tell you that the FTA staff is committed to working with partners to resolve that concern and again recognize why this is so important for your constituents and really for the region and for the entire country.

Mr. SIRES. Yes, not only is the tunnel 100 years old, but all the infrastructure leading to the tunnel is also 100 years old. And we have one particular bridge that we are working on with the State where when you open it and you close it, it doesn't close properly, and you have to use a sledge hammer to line up the rails.

Can you imagine this if this goes? And that is the main bridge that leads all these commuter trains into these tunnels. So I hope that we can work together and build a nice relationship. Maybe you can come to the district, and I will give you a sledge hammer so you can see what happens to the bridge when it doesn't close. So, as you can see, all the modes of transportation that I have in my district, I think I have just about every kind of transportation there is in America in my district.

So thank you for your commitment. I hope that your administration will see the importance of these tunnels. And I was just wondering, has there been any discussion on any infrastructure bill that is going to come out of the administration yet?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, I certainly think this is the kind of critical infrastructure that has been allowed to be disinvested for so long that is on our mind as the administration is shaping infrastructure priorities. And it is certainly something that is coming up every time I speak to leaders from New Jersey, from New York, and more broadly as we think about our national policy.

I would welcome a chance to take you up on that invitation to see it for myself. I am not sure it is wise to trust me with a sledge hammer in my hands, but I will do everything I can to learn about the infrastructure issue there.

Mr. SIRES. Great. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Katko?

John? Mr. Katko?

OK. Dr. Babin?

Dr. BABIN. Yes, sir. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Graves. And I also want to say thank you to you, Mr. Secretary, for coming on with us and meeting with us on these very important issues.

President Biden has made it his priority to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles nationwide. And while I think that we can all agree that fuel economy is very important and electric vehicles will play an important role in expanding the choices of cars that are available to customers, I am concerned about the impact that some of President Biden's proposals may have on my constituents in southeast Texas. My district is roughly from Houston over to Louisiana.

Last Congress, there were several hearings held in both Chambers with witnesses underscoring how dependent that the United States is on China for acquiring their supply of critical rare earth minerals that are needed for producing electric vehicle batteries. And so, with that, I would like to ask you several short-answer questions, if you don't mind.

First off, California Governor Gavin Newsom had set a goal of halting the sale of internal combustion engines in California by 2035. And I was wondering if the administration, the Biden administration, do you all support the goal of banning the sale of traditional vehicles?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I have not heard of anything to that effect at the national or Federal level. Although, I would note that a lot of industry leaders, American auto companies are moving in that direction already. You see the announcements from players like GM talking about their fleets being all electric by that time. So I have not heard of that in a mandatory context, but that certainly seems to be where the U.S. auto industry is headed.

Dr. BABIN. OK. Thank you. Number two, do you believe that the term "zero-emission vehicle" must include a full life-cycle analysis and not just an examination of the vehicle's tailpipe emissions?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I think it is wise to look at both. Of course, the tailpipe emissions are what accounts for the most immediate impact coming from the vehicle. But whether we are talking about the auto context or what is going on in the sustainable aviation fuels or others, certainly makes sense to look at the entire picture.

Dr. BABIN. Absolutely. Thank you.

And given the issue surrounding the solvency within the Highway Trust Fund and that electric vehicle drivers use our bridges and roads while not paying taxes to support this infrastructure, like those who do drive combustion engines, do you support a policy

for electric vehicles to pay their fair share into the Highway Trust Fund, especially given the fact that electric vehicles weigh more than their internal combustion engine equivalent? And so do you support a vehicle-miles traveled, a VMT plan? If so, what would that rollout look like for VMT?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, I am very open to that, ultimately for the user-pays principle to be intact. As more and more drivers are driving electric vehicles, obviously, electric vehicles ought to be charged, too, in some way, shape, or form. We have heard a lot of different ways to do it. Some of them are comparable to things like the electronic logging devices that are common on trucks, but there are concerns about technology and privacy there. So I think we've got a little work to do. There are pilots increasingly underway. We should learn from them and continue to explore whether this is the best way to face with that user-pays principle.

Dr. BABIN. All right. Thank you very much. Do you support providing maximum flexibility to State departments of transportation to determine where funding is best spent to benefit their transportation systems? And will you support funding for proven core DOT programs and letting the States decide how best to accomplish these goals of these new programs without the burden of new set-asides?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I certainly have a lot of regard for State-level decisionmaking. I will add to that local decisionmaking because I have learned it is sometimes a mistake to assume that a State authority and a local community are on the same page. I view our role as pursuing the broadest policy goals that we have at the Federal level and that, as much as possible, encouraging States, localities, and other bodies to innovate, to meet those goals in the best way. And that is how we have tried to tune the early issues of our discretionary grants, again, making the goals clear, but challenging those local communities and other applicants to explain how they seek to get there.

Dr. BABIN. Glad to hear you talk about the locals. And you as a former mayor, I am a former mayor as well, so I appreciate that.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. All right.

Dr. BABIN. How do you plan on addressing the cyber and data privacy concerns that continue to remain a threat from foreign governments like China?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. This is a—

Mr. DEFAZIO. Answer very quickly, please.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I will be brief. It is major strategic concern, of course, not limited to transportation. And so we need a whole-of-Government approach to cybersecurity, and we will do everything we can to make sure DOT is at the table to be part of that.

Dr. BABIN. Thank you very much.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Mr. GARAMENDI?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I am on here. I want to really thank you, and, particularly, I want to commend the Secretary for being one of the very most informed witnesses we have had for a long, long time. You really are on top of all of these issues.

When I ran for Congress in 2009, the Oakland Bay Bridge was built with Chinese steel. And I made the Make It in America policy an integral part of my work over the last decade. I've got to tell you how thrilled I was on the fifth day in office when President Biden issued an Executive order that American taxpayer money would be used to buy American-made goods and services. Obviously, the transportation sector is one of the major areas in which American taxpayer dollars will find their way into the economy or into the Chinese or foreign economies. So my series of questions really deal with this issue of Buy American, Make It in America.

In 1983, the Federal Highway Administration issued a very broad waiver that basically set aside all of the Buy American provisions for the Federal Highway Administration. That waiver is still in existence.

And so my question to you, Mr. Secretary, is, will you look at this waiver and, essentially, junk it and allow the President's policy of American taxpayer money being used to buy American products, services, and goods?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. We will be taking a hard look at it. I appreciate you raising the importance of Made in America, Buy it in America. And the President's Executive order directs every agency to assess any longstanding or nationwide waivers, like the 1983 Federal Highway Administration waiver you are describing. So we will be reviewing that, as well as all the other existing waivers, and making sure that we are doing everything we can in keeping with the spirit of the President's order.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I am all interested in spirit, but I am much more interested in what actually happens. When the rubber meets the road, is that road built with American products and services? So, yes, we are going to be looking at this all the way through.

Also, the Department of Transportation is far more than just highways. We have talked about many of those elements here today. Waivers are found in virtually every single aspect of your work. You mentioned a moment ago that you would look at all the waivers. I assume by "all" you mean every part of your Department where there may be a waiver where American taxpayer money is finding its way into the pockets of manufacturers and suppliers in other countries. Is that the case?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. That's right. You know, we know that there are similar but not identical requirements across our different parts of the Department. So we've got to look at every piece of it. And that is going to be part of our internal review.

Mr. GARAMENDI. As you undoubtedly heard from the chairman's opening statement, this committee is way into this issue. We are continuing to write further restrictions and requirements. We will continue to do that. So we would expect that in your role as Secretary you will make sure that American taxpayer money is spent here in America.

There is a whole series of other issues that I was going to ask. Most of those have already been asked with regard to resiliency and the GPS system. Thank you for your attention to that.

Beyond that, I really look forward to working with you. And, once again, I am very impressed by your extensive understanding of the issues. I don't think you have missed a beat on any question

that we put forward. And I don't think I can come up with one that would stump you at this point.

I look forward to working with you. Thank you so very much for being with us today, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I yield back my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Graves from Louisiana.

Mr. GRAVES OF LOUISIANA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I am traveling on one of these interstates right now. I want to congratulate you for your position, and I hope you are finding Washington, DC, as hospitable as South Bend. I represent Baton Rouge, Louisiana, among other places, which, like South Bend, is on a river [inaudible] but there is a reason for that. No one would ever model after this one system, but [inaudible].

Mr. DEFAZIO. Garret, you are breaking up. You lost your audio. I can't hear you. Hopefully, he will get to a spot where he gets better connectivity.

Mr. Rouzer?

Mr. ROUZER. Here I am, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yes. Go for it.

Mr. Secretary, congratulations on your nomination and confirmation.

I really look forward to working with you in your new capacity. And as my colleague Congressman Garamendi said, I am quite impressed with your array of knowledge and preparedness for today.

I have a particular issue that not many people are really all that aware of, the fact that U.S. airlines refused to transport animals intended for medical research. And, of course, they have no issue transporting those same animals for other purposes. You know, almost every drug, treatment, medical device, diagnostic tool, or cure that has been developed relies on animal models, animal research, including COVID-19 vaccines.

The U.S. Government, as you know, strictly regulates animal research but requires animal testing before a new drug is allowed to go to human trial. That is part of the requirement of the FDA. So, in 2018, the National Association for Biomedical Research filed a complaint with the Department of Transportation challenging the policies of these airlines that refused to transport animals intended for medical research.

And I just want to know if you are up to speed on this, and what the Department plans to do moving forward? Because one of the key issues here, China and other countries are making greater advancements scientifically because of this policy, basically. And, of course, in China and elsewhere, they don't have anywhere close to the number of rules and regulations and the strict safeguards to protect animals and their welfare as we do here in the United States. And so this is really an important issue from a standpoint of national security, from a standpoint of scientific advancement and being on the cutting edge in this country versus losing pace with China and other countries.

And so I really hope that the DOT, under your leadership, will take a good look at this and put in place guidelines so that the air-

lines will have what they need and understanding that they need to be transporting these animals just like they do other animals. So I am just curious if you are up to speed on that, and if you have any thoughts on that front, and what you might be planning to do moving forward.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you. I think I am not as versed on this issue as you are, but I am aware of the complaint that was raised by the National Association for Biomedical Research, and I know that it raises issues that are very important and could have very significant implications for research institutions, for airlines, and others. And one indication of just how complex and important the issue is, is that the Department so far has received about 24,000 submissions for comment from research organizations, advocacy organizations, and others. Those submissions are raising a number of complex facts, legal arguments, and policy issues that would have to be considered by the Department before we can render a decision on the merits of the concerns.

So what I can tell you now is that the Department is working diligently to work through all of those submissions and complete a review. And as soon as that assessment and review can be responsibly completed, then a decision will be forthcoming.

Mr. ROUZER. Well, I think it is important to note that the public comment docket closed December 2018, and so this has been a consistent problem, if you will. And I just think from a, as I mentioned earlier, from a standpoint of cutting-edge research that is necessary for the cures that we need to be bringing to the market, certainly, COVID-19 is a great example of why you have got to have animal research. Obviously, you are not going to put a vaccine in an arm that you have not tested thoroughly. And you've got to have primates in order to do that, in order to get that type of testing to get the results so that you know it is safe for human use. And so it is just a critical element of medical research. And we already have a significant decrease in the number of primates that are available for medical research. And this desire among the airlines to avoid transportation of these animals for such purpose is a real problem, and it is a growing problem by the day. So I really appreciate you taking a good look at that. And I hope that we can work together to make America the number one place to do research and to really make some progress on that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ROUZER. I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Johnson of Georgia.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for hosting today's hearing.

And I also want to thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, for your testimony today.

In your view, sir, should the Federal Government incentivize car and truck purchasers, including fleet operators, to purchase electric vehicles, and if so, how should they be incentivized?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, it is certainly a policy goal of the administration to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles. As you know, we have had some policies in that regard for some time, such as the tax credit. But the tax credit is limited based on how many

vehicles are purchased from an individual automaker. And now would be a good time to look at what adjustments could be made.

I will say that, over time, I think, eventually, the pricing on the electric vehicles gets better and better to where it becomes a financial win regardless because of the lower cost of maintenance and fuel. But in many categories of vehicle, we are not there yet. And I would say, at least speaking for myself and this Department, we are very open to a number of different approaches that can help us meet that policy goal.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Thank you.

Since 1982, highways have received approximately 80 percent of surface transportation funding and transit has received approximately 20 percent. Do you and the administration believe we can meet our transportation needs, respond to the climate crisis, and connect all Americans to jobs and services by continuing the way we currently distribute Federal funding for highways and transit, often referred to as the 80/20 split? And do you support revisiting the 80/20 split to ensure that funding goes to moving all Americans, especially our most vulnerable communities who rely on transit?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, what we know is that there are a lot of different dimensions to getting around for different people. And for some, that involves a privately owned vehicle; for some, that involves transit; and for many, it involves a combination of those things. But I believe by investing in transit-oriented development and, for that matter, rural main streets in the right balance, we can support people getting to go where they need to be in any number of ways.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Can you look at the issue of the 80/20 split to determine whether or not it is still the best practice for America as we move forward?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I would welcome an opportunity to take a look at that and work with you on that.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Thank you.

The Federal Government has long maintained the position to not provide operating costs for transit agencies that often serve our most vulnerable communities. Do you support long-term Federal operating support for transit agencies?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I do want to take a look at that. As you know, the COVID relief that Congress authorized did support those operating costs in a way that I think was welcomed by transit agencies across the country. But as you point out, that has not been customarily the way the Federal Government supports transit. And if all of the support is in the capital direction and not in the operating direction, sometimes that can actually create an incentive to take on equipment that then raises operating costs, and it can be a bit of a cycle that is a problem.

So I do think that any time there is a reauthorization or a revisiting of the congressional authority, it is a good time to look at that.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Thank you. As the recent Amazon Headquarters 2 search highlighted, businesses want to be located in walkable transit-connected communities. Last week, a coalition of local chambers of commerce wrote to this committee and made

it clear that businesses want the Federal transportation program to invest in projects that improve people's access to jobs and services, not increase vehicle speeds. Do you agree that safer, walkable, transit-friendly communities support economic growth and business creation? And as a former mayor, can you describe the economic impacts of investments in complete and safe streets?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Absolutely. In my own experience as mayor, we decided to upgrade what had been a two-way or a pair of one-way, basically, highways that just blasted vehicles through the middle of our downtown. And what we found is that, when we adjusted that, still supported car travel, but not all about speed and making it just safer to walk or bicycle or be there, the business community responded, and we saw a lot of economic growth. So it is an important principle. I think employers and employees increasingly expect it. And it has got to be part of the picture as we think about our infrastructure for the future.

Mr. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. We are going to return to Mr. Graves, and then he will have 4 minutes and 30 seconds, and, hopefully, he has better connectivity.

Mr. Graves?

Mr. GRAVES OF LOUISIANA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am sorry about that. We just got internet in Louisiana, and I thought my cord was longer.

Mr. Secretary, again, congratulations to you. I look forward to working with you. First question, I want to follow up with something Congressman Babin and Congressman Davis brought up related to different types of energy technologies. You have talked a good bit about electric charging stations. Why is it that the Department would choose a technology as opposed to letting innovators innovate? As you know, charging stations would largely relegate our future of cars to only electric technology, and at the same time, the generation of that electricity may be dirty, which may not actually advance our low-emission goals.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, it is a great point that, you know, the cleanliness of an electric car is only as good as the electricity going into it. And that is why we recognize this is not a one-Department-at-a-time kind of issue, and we really need to partner with the Department of Energy to make sure that renewable energy is adopted and we have a grid that can support electric charging stations.

I guess, in my view, there is a policy role here, though, in the same way that, I think, many in Congress believe, or at least historically have believed that the U.S. ought to have a policy when it comes to access to fossil fuel energy and engagement in what is going on with oil and gas, that similarly the U.S. has a policy interest in the adoption of electric vehicles.

Mr. GRAVES OF LOUISIANA. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, I just want to remind you that the United States has reduced emissions in the energy sector more than the next 12 emissions-reducing countries combined. And we have done that by being able to continue utilizing conventional fuels and using them in a cleaner manner. I think it would be a mistake to box out any type of fuels. And, again, I think we need to be letting the

innovators do what they do. And I would urge you to consider that as you move forward.

Second issue, I want to jump in quickly into the aviation space. Obviously, with the proliferation of drones and unmanned systems, huge potential for the United States. We passed legislation that has a lot of requirements that helps to lay the groundwork for that technology. And I just urge you to keep that on the front burner. But a letter that Ranking Member Sam Graves and I sent to you recently regarding EASA and some comments that they made regarding effectively not complying with the bilateral agreement on aircraft certification. We had requested that you just engage EASA. I don't know if you had a chance to look at that at all, but effectively they were not giving, I guess, much integrity to the U.S. certification process, despite the changes Chairman DeFazio, Chairman Larsen, myself, and Ranking Member Graves recently made. It raised strong concerns that they would operate outside that bilateral agreement. Again, I just wanted to ask if you could please engage there.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, we are in receipt of your letter. I saw the comments from EASA, and we are going to continue to take steps as appropriate to make sure that those agreements that are in place are upheld because it is so important for the U.S. to be the unquestioned global leader in aviation safety.

Mr. GRAVES OF LOUISIANA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate that.

The last issue I had, we sent a letter last week, and I don't know if you have had a chance to review it or your team, related to the INFRA program. Many of us on this committee spent a lot of blood, sweat, and tears putting the INFRA program together and think it is really important, it is foundational to some of our major transportation projects across the United States.

I personally worked with Chairman DeFazio and others to make sure that we had appropriate criteria, objectives, and goals included in what INFRA was trying to advance. We included a number of things that I think was very important: efficiency in the transportation system, mobility, national energy security, resiliency, and others.

I was disheartened when I read the press release coming from the Department of Transportation which indicated that climate change, racial equality, and environmental justice were the priorities. Those are not in the statute, yet the statutory objectives weren't mentioned.

I just wanted to get your feedback and understanding. It almost seemed like there were folks that were trying to hijack the program from the statutory requirements and just asking if you could comment on objectives there.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Sure. So, in our view, what we are doing with INFRA is completely consistent with statute. Now, of course, the statute lays a framework, and then the Department has added or elaborated or modified its own specific evaluation criteria consistent with those statutory requirements, as we have in every round of INFRA since the inception of the program. And I think one reason why it is important to have climate in there is because of the statutory mention of resilience in the environment. So we

really are trying to track that but, of course, doing it in a way that is also consistent with the policy goals of the administration. It just puts a little bit of specificity on the bones of what is there in the statutory language.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. GRAVES OF LOUISIANA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I want to reinvite you to Louisiana and yield back the balance of my time.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Carson.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, for coming before our committee today. As a fellow Hoosier, I am very pleased, and we are very proud to have you leading the Department of Transportation. I am looking forward to working with you.

As you know, Mr. Secretary, I represent Beech Grove, Indiana, which includes the largest passenger rail maintenance facility in the country. The work being done at this facility is very critical to the safe and efficient operation of our rail system.

I continue to be concerned, Mr. Secretary, about plans from the previous administration to cut back or outsource the operations and personnel at maintenance facilities. I know your plans will be to move in a different direction, or one that will strengthen our ability to maintain and improve passenger rail service, and the maintenance needed to keep our fleets running safely and smoothly. What are your thoughts, Mr. Secretary, and plans for rail maintenance facilities, particularly addressing the possibility of outsourcing this work?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thanks for your advocacy for rail broadly and for these maintenance facilities and workers specifically. You know, again, let me begin with the basic commitment of the Biden-Harris administration, something so important to the President, which is that every step that we take in our transportation policy is about creating and sustaining good-paying American jobs. And we know a lot of those good-paying American jobs are those that you are speaking about and are right there in the Hoosier State in maintenance. And any policies that continue to develop have to be consistent with that.

We will look in more detail at the outlook as a new administration comes in and assesses the plans that have been made on the rail front. But my hope as we are potentially at the doorstep of a next great rail revolution would be that this will only increase the opportunity that exists for great-paying American and union jobs when it comes to maintenance and the whole of the enterprise when it comes to rail and U.S. transportation more broadly.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman, I yield back.

Ms. NORTON [presiding]. The gentleman yields.

We go next to Mr. Katko.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And, Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you. And, as you know, we met in the White House in the Oval Office. We spoke for about 1½ hours in that meeting with the President and several Republicans and Democrats. And I know you got the message then about the

need for bipartisanship. And that has been the hallmark of this committee.

And, lately, I think we have kind of veered a little bit away from that. And I know Chairman DeFazio very much wants to have a bipartisan infrastructure package. I know Ranking Member Graves does. I think all of us do. And so it is really going to have to come from the top down. And I really hope that you can make sure, impress upon the President, as I tried to do, and others, that—send a message that we really want a bipartisan bill.

We can get something done in a bipartisan manner if the direction from the White House and from you indicates that is your desire. So I hope you do that.

And I've got to tell you, I just came back from a motorcycle ride, my first one of the season, and I can reaffirm to you the obvious—that our roads and bridges in this country suck, and they need a lot of work. And you can't do it in a partisan manner because it is too big an issue for us to get done. And I hope very much that not only is it a bipartisan on infrastructure but bipartisan on how they build in particular. It is very, very important to my district.

So, as we discussed, it is a real desire to have this bipartisanship. And in central New York, comprehensive infrastructure reform would mean dependable Federal support for in-demand projects like the Interstate 81 rebuild, which I mentioned to you in our previous meeting. It means increased investments to modernize our clean water and wastewater systems and applying the lessons of the pandemic to expand broadband connectivity and to ensure all families have access to essential services in the 21st century.

These are all goals we can accomplish together. And the key word there is “together.” And there is one principle for this discussion that I know many of my colleagues on this panel would agree, so how we get there matters. Bipartisan involvement in this process is not only essential to enacting legislation and receive support from both sides of the aisle but to pass an infrastructure bill that reflects the needs of every American community.

With that in mind, I will say that the Infrastructure Working Group from the Problem Solvers Caucus, and if you recall at our meeting previously, Mr. Secretary, I gave you a copy of our Problem Solvers Caucus outline from 2018. And we are in the process of updating it now, and we should be able to get that to you shortly.

I commend that to you. And I am proud to work with my cochair on that to engage administration on these important issues.

Excuse me, could you hold my time for a minute, please? Could someone please mute their microphone? I would appreciate it. I would ask for the [inaudible] of my time. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. You may continue. I am sorry.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you. I appreciate it. I hope we can continue working together on a truly bipartisan infrastructure package in the coming months, and I look forward to hearing from you on some of those today.

As I mentioned earlier, the I-81 rebuild in my district is truly a monumental project, which will impact the city of Syracuse and the surrounding areas for generations to come. It is literally a multibillion-dollar project.

And since your confirmation, I know that your office has already heard from myself and other local elected officials about the importance of I-81, and of ensuring that all voices are heard on this project. It is not just a city project; it is a regional project.

And with this amount of time, would you be able to speak to your familiarity with the project, Mr. Secretary, and advise on the status of its consideration by the Federal Highway Administration?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So thank you for raising that, and you are right, I have got a stack of letters on this, and I have heard from you and others about how important the project is. I will have to go back to Federal—

Mr. KATKO. I told you, it's not just Syracuse!

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, it is a community that reminds me a lot of home, and I recognize the issues that have led to the urgency of having infrastructure improvements there.

To your earlier remark, there is, you know, mayors are fond of pointing out how there is no such thing as a Democrat or Republican pothole. And I think when it comes to our roads and a lot of other things, it is a shared bipartisan priority. So, I would ask you to bear with me while I get with the Federal Highway Administration and find out any kind of procedural matters that would help to speak to where that is in terms of its progress but certainly have heard loud and clear its importance to the communities you represent.

Mr. KATKO. Well, I appreciate it. And I will reiterate my request to have you come up and see it for yourself. I think this would be a good test project for you to see how to be innovative and use American ingenuity to fix a longstanding problem in central New York. And I will sweeten the pot by saying my sister and brother-in-law have the best Irish pub in Syracuse, and I will buy you a beer if you come up. How is that?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. It sounds good.

Mr. KATKO. Also, as you know, Mr. Secretary, the infrastructure report card issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers earlier this month gave the U.S. a C-minus on the clean water infrastructure. The report card projects the annual investment gap for drinking water and wastewater systems would grow to \$434 billion by 2029. Do you expect the need for expanded investments to be reflected in the administration's budget request this year? And to what extent does the administration evaluate the formula of smart water technology to modernize these systems?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, no topic could be closer to my former mayoral heart than smart water technology. I do want to note that, while the committee's mandate is transportation and infrastructure, I would be a little outside of my lane if I speak to the water and wastewater dimension before the White House does, but I know that it is an active topic of conversation. And I really want to embrace your raising this issue because sometimes what is underground is not considered as sexy as the trains, planes, and automobiles that you can see, but it is unquestionably an important part of infrastructure.

Mr. KATKO. Chairwoman—

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. We go now to Ms. Titus.

Ms. Titus?

Ms. TITUS. I am coming. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the committee, and I hope that soon I will be able to host you again here in Las Vegas. We enjoyed having you here.

Southern Nevada has a lot going on right now. There are many exciting and innovative transportation projects already underway. We have got the people-mover project that is under the new convention center in partnership with the Boring Company. We are testing the first autonomous vehicle without a safety driver. And we have also got a digital curbside traffic management system that is being piloted in downtown Las Vegas. But there is still a lot to do, and most of that has to do with regional connections.

We need to be connected to our neighbors in Arizona and in California. And a couple of things that are on the horizon are addressing the real congestion issues between here and California. And we are looking at two ways to do that. One is by improving I-15 from here to there, that is just like a parking lot on weekends with people traveling back and forth to Las Vegas from that area. And the other is supporting the buildout of the Brightline West. And this, I am sure, as you know, is a privately owned and operated high-speed train that is all electric. And we want to see that sort of thing developed here in the Southwest, not just in the Northeast or in Florida.

In addition to that, we hope to develop the Interstate 11 between Las Vegas and Phoenix. We are the only two metropolitan areas in the country that aren't connected by interstate. So I wonder if you would comment on regional projects. I know you received a letter from Arizona Representative Stanton and me about getting some funding to complete the EIS for that I-11 project. But would you talk about the administration's position on not just local but projects of regional significance, including, specifically, those that I mentioned?

Ms. NORTON. Did the gentleman hear the question?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, and thank you for, first of all, elevating the importance of the regional approach. I think it is something that really needs to be recognized in terms of, you know, framework that has sometimes pitted neighboring States against each other or neighboring communities against each other. And what I have seen in, you know, certainly in our own experience in Indiana but also as we are contemplating the future of transportation is you can't do these things one community at a time. So it certainly got our attention in a favorable way to see how Arizona and Nevada legislators are speaking one voice on the importance of many of the projects like those that you just mentioned. You know, in visiting Las Vegas, I have often been struck by how it is like a glimpse of the future. That is true demographically, but it is also sometimes true technologically in ways like what you have described.

But as for the need for that interstate extension, again, I have heard that loud and clear. And it is the kind of project that is a reminder of what might be possible if we were investing more as

a country in making sure we have had the infrastructure [inaudible] as well as taking care of what we already got. And I would just urge us to continue to find ways to be smart in assigning resources to those needs, recognizing when the expansion or introduction of the highway really would relieve congestion, and other cases and places where it is really about mode shifting and giving people alternatives to the highways that will have the biggest effect. And I will welcome the chance to continue working with that on what is going to be right for Nevada, for the constituents who you represent, and the Southwest as a region.

Ms. TITUS. Well, thank you, Mr. Secretary. I am glad to hear that.

Before I go, I would just like to draw one other thing to your attention, and we have heard about safety for all users. If you look at the statistics, you see that children in underserved communities face a lot of disparity in terms of their safety, in terms of the number of children who are killed in accidents without seatbelts, killed as pedestrians. I have got a bill called Enhancing Child Passenger Safety in Underserved Communities.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Can you make sure the mic is back up?

Ms. TITUS. Have I lost you? Well, it's Enhancing Child Passenger Safety in Underserved Communities. So I hope that the Department will work with me to include that in an infrastructure bill because we need to be sure that all users, including in those minority communities, especially children, are protected. And I will yield back. If you will just put that on your calendar, on your agenda. Thank you.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Oh, I am hearing something.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentlelady for her questions.

We move now to Mr. Rouzer. I am sorry, to Mr. Bost.

Mr. BOST. Madam Chair, I think Mr. Rouzer has already—

Ms. NORTON. I am sorry, to Mr. Bost.

Mr. BOST. Yes, thank you Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, I hope we have got connectivity so we can understand and get some answers. I know there is a little bit of a problem going on there. But I want to thank you for being here today.

You know, I have been working across trying to address the problem of shortage for truck parking in Congress by leading the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act. This is a bipartisan bill that will dedicate existing Federal funding to use exclusively for building out truck parking capacities. And what I would like to know is how familiar are you with the truck parking shortage crisis across the country and, specifically, the safety hazards that go along with it, as well as the problems that it causes? And how do you plan to work with the States and stakeholders to actually solve the problem because DOT and the States have studied this problem more than enough? They know it is a real problem, but it is past time that the DOT prioritizes this issue and addresses it.

Ms. NORTON. Are you there, Mr. Secretary? Have we lost the Secretary?

VOICE. I think he is having internet issues.

Ms. NORTON. We are having internet issues. We will pause. Mr. Secretary, did you hear the question?

We will take a 5-minute recess to try to get the Secretary back.

[Recess.]

Mr. BOST. Are we ready to resume?

Ms. NORTON. Yes, you can resume now.

Mr. BOST. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, I don't know if you got the question or not, but I just need to know how familiar you are with the truck parking shortage crisis across the country and, specifically, the safety hazards that the shortage causes, and how you plan to work with the States and other stakeholders to solve the problem? You know, DOT had studied this a long time. But it's time to quit studying it because they came up with the same fact we all know, which is we're short on parking spots.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So I certainly recognize the concern. And I hope to get more familiar with it in short order. There are certainly tools that could be used, whether we are talking about the efficiency of how trucks are routed or whether we are talking about the uses of right-of-way, and I will do what I can to make sure I have a more informed response on that by the next time we speak.

Mr. BOST. I would love to have the time to sit and talk to you about it. I actually myself am one of the few Members of Congress that grew up in a trucking family. My grandfather started a trucking business in 1933. I have been making working with the—many of the stakeholders are involved and the dangers and the fact of the amount of drivers that we are losing on the road and everything because of the safety concerns, not only to the drivers of the trucks but also four-wheel vehicles when there is not parking spots running underneath trucks, and things like that that occur.

But I want to switch topics just right quick, if I can. According to a report in the 2017 [inaudible], the worst traffic jam in America that occurred in 2017 wasn't on a highway. It was along the inland waterways, not our highway system at all. So imagine the 50-mile backup with barges on the Ohio River and \$22 billion worth of U.S. grain and other products each year being held up. In my district, the project I hear most about from the ag industry is the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, or NESP, which would lead to seven new 1,200-foot locks and dams on the upper Mississippi River and the Illinois waterways. Where does the modernization of U.S. locks and dams fit into President Biden's infrastructure strategy?

Ms. NORTON. Can you hear him, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, I apologize. It skipped for a moment, but I believe I understood the question to be about where the modernization of waterway infrastructure fits in the President's agenda. And I appreciate you raising this. It doesn't get as much attention, but it is incredibly important to the economic competitiveness of this country and to the flow of goods in so many regions. So there is no question that this needs to be part of the overall vision. I am respectful of different jurisdictional boundaries that are at play. But in my simplistic understanding of surface transportation, water is certainly a surface, and we need to be thinking about it.

Mr. BOST. Many of the things are outdated and the clog and bottleneck that occurs just north of my district, I have a unique situation. I have three navigable waterways in my district: the Mississippi, Ohio, and Kaskaskia River, and the concerns that it has

for agriculture. If there is a way we can work with you on that, we would be glad to do that.

I had two other questions which have already been asked and/or you responded to.

And, with that, Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. HUFFMAN, you are recognized.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And, Secretary Buttigieg, congratulations. Welcome to our committee, and thanks for your leadership. I agree with you that now is the time; this is the best opportunity we are going to see in our lifetimes to do something big and transformative and to do double duty by tackling climate crisis as we tackle our infrastructure needs.

So I am coming to you from the north coast of California, where again you have a standing invitation to visit. In addition to showing you one of the most beautiful places in the world, I would love to show you a lot of aging and failing infrastructure, including highways, roads, and bridges. We are also on the front line of climate change, not just the catastrophic wildfires that have swept our State, but a host of other climate impacts from severe droughts to flooding, rising sea levels, and changing ocean conditions.

We are acutely aware that just building back infrastructure to the standards and expectations we had decades ago is not going to cut it. We have got to build back better with an eye toward climate impacts.

And so I would like to ask you about two specific programs that can help us do that. First is, in the reauthorization this committee passed last year, we created a new Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. This would relocate or replace transportation infrastructure projects that are repeatedly failing.

It is common sense, I believe, that if you are endlessly fixing a section of highway that keeps failing, you shouldn't use expensive Band-Aids forever; you should find a permanent fix. And the poster child for this problem is on a rugged stretch of coastline in my district, just south of Crescent City, where Highway 101 clings sometimes to a very steep, crumbling cliff high above the ocean. It is known as Last Chance Grade. And because the hillside is constantly sliding, the road is often closed for weeks or months at a time while Caltrans figures out another way to temporarily keep it from falling into the ocean. This is our main north-south transportation corridor. So every time it closes, it disrupts the entire region. And we know that a massive failure that would cost the region \$130 million annually in addition to whatever lives would be lost is just a matter of time.

So we are trying to get ahead of this by convening a comprehensive stakeholder group and identifying the most viable cost-effective ways to reroute this stretch of highway. We are going to do that, but this is a remote, rural, economically challenged area. We are going to need a significant Federal investment to get it done.

So, Secretary Buttigieg, can you discuss what the administration wants to do for projects like Last Chance Grade, where critical infrastructure keeps failing and really needs to be rerouted and replaced? Do you agree we need a dedicated program like what we passed out of the House last year?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thanks for raising this. I agree that it is very important for us to make sure however we do it, structurally or programmatically, and you have laid out a great template for a way to do it. But we recognize that the conditions are shifting. Sometimes literally the ground is shifting beneath the infrastructure that we are contemplating. And sometimes the right answer will change, if not within the lifetime of the authorization, certainly, within the lifetime of the project. Shame on us if we are building roads or bridges or anything else that is expected to last into the 2070s without thinking about how that is going to look different than the 1970s. And I think that forward-looking approach to resiliency needs to be woven into every part of the way we approach our infrastructure spending.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

So we have talked a lot about resiliency. I have described the climate impacts we are feeling in California. There is another Federal program that really helps disaster-impacted communities repair roads and get back on their feet. It is the Emergency Relief, or ER, program. And disasters often devastate entire regions, which can cause material and workforce shortages. That makes it hard to meet the program's 2-year timeline for beginning construction.

The last administration was completely unsympathetic to this problem. They rejected a number of extension requests in my district and elsewhere. This jeopardizes tens of millions of dollars in construction projects that we need to repair roads and get back on our feet. And this committee took action to fix it last year. We favorably reported changes to the ER program. Every single Democrat in California supports it. We are going to keep tackling this. But as we try to pass this legislation, you are in a position to assure disaster-impacted communities, that reasonable requests for extension will be considered, unlike what we got from the last administration. Will you provide us that assurance?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I will make sure that there is every reasonable consideration of those conditions. I understand the impatience, of course, that is encoded into our programs to make sure that they get done, but it can't be one size fits all, especially for disaster-impacted communities like those you are describing.

Mr. HUFFMAN. I really appreciate that, Mr. Secretary.

I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Weber of Texas.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Madam Chair, I appreciate that.

Welcome, Mr. Secretary, it is nice to see you here in the first hearing and welcome to your new position. Can you hear me?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. Thanks very much. I can. I appreciate the kind words.

Mr. WEBER. No, you betcha. I saw the notice of funding availability for the recent INFRA grant round that one of the considerations your Department will use in evaluating applications is

whether a project creates or will lead to union jobs. Now, we have got our great Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson listening in. So I am grateful she is here. I hope Brian Babin is here, as well as perhaps Sheriff Nehls.

An interesting factoid the Texas Department of Transportation told me when I was in the Texas House before I got demoted to Congress was that Texas has so many roads and so many rights-of-way; when they mow all of those rights-of-way, they have actually just got through mowing the entire State of Rhode Island. So, needless to say, we have a lot of roads and rights-of-way in Texas that are important to us.

But irrespective of leading to union jobs and whatever political considerations might be involved in that kind of a decisionmaking process, doesn't it strike you that that actually creates an immediate disadvantage for applicants like Texas in a right-to-work State? And before you answer, I want to add that Congress created and funds these grants, and yet if this administrative decision is made, I don't think it is going to be in line with the stated purpose of those programs. So I guess, (A), are you aware of what I am talking about? And (B), and are you willing to reconsider your decisions to include this disqualifying factor in awarding other grants because it is going to have negative consequences on a lot of other States, probably notably the biggest one, of course, being our beloved Texas?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Sure. So I want to make sure I understand exactly what conditions this would be regarded as disqualifying under. I will say, of course, the administration has a commitment to making sure we create as many good-paying jobs as possible. And there is an expectation for us to promote union jobs and jobs that pay prevailing wages. I don't believe that that is a cutoff type of requirement. As you know, there are a lot of overlapping goals that are reflected in INFRA, as we have in all of our discretionary grants. And I believe the cutoff date for those grants was the 19th of March. So we are looking forward to seeing what different communities have come up, and I imagine some from around your neighborhood will be among them.

Mr. WEBER. Well, we certainly hope so. Thank you for that.

And, then secondly, I am on, of course, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. There is a lot of pipelines in our area. Texas, as you might guess, we would surmise, we would make the claim that Texas is the energy-leading State in the country. And so it is very, very important to us. In 2020, this committee worked in a bipartisan manner with the Senate to pass reauthorization of the PIPES Act for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, which we call PHMSA. Can you please provide an update to our committee here today on the Department's plan to implement that legislation? Are you familiar with it? Have you all discussed that?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, I appreciate the question. So we know that, since the PIPES Act has passed, it contains, of course, a lot of expectations directing us and PHMSA to prepare to respond in terms of the rulemaking. So there is right now focus on making sure we have the capacity. There is staffing up going on, including

the first agencywide NEPA expert and new regulatory attorneys to make sure that we can support that.

And we know that there are a lot of rules that have been pending for some time that need to be finalized, and so we need to make sure that those are getting over the finish line too. So I am aware of the legislative expectations, and we will be doing everything we can with PHMSA leadership to make sure we are meeting congressional intent.

Mr. WEBER. Well, thank you.

And, finally, the U.S. has emerged as key player in the LNG marketplace. Texas, of course, is a big one. Louisiana right next door to us is a big one. A lot of it goes down the Sabine-Neches Waterway, which is managed by the Sabine-Neches Navigation District. The bipartisan pipeline safety legislation passed last year required PHMSA to update regulations to enhance LNG safety and establish an LNG center of excellence. What more do you know about that, and can you commit to us today that PHMSA will meaningfully engage in those mandates and complete them in a timely fashion?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, we will certainly seek to complete every mandate in a timely fashion. With regard to the center of excellence, I would ask you to allow me to consult with PHMSA leadership to get a progress report on that, and we will try to get you an update.

Mr. WEBER. Fair enough, Mr. Secretary, and welcome. I yield back.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. Ms. Brownley. I recognize Ms. Brownley.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And welcome, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for being here. And we are very, very excited about your leadership in the transportation sector. And also thank you for your commitment to addressing the climate impacts of our transportation system.

To help achieve our carbon reduction goals, I introduced the Green Bus Act, which would set a national goal for the zero-emission bus transition, similar to California's goal, which requires that, beginning in 2029, all new buses that are purchased using Federal funds be zero-emission buses. So I want to ask do you believe the next surface transportation bill should set a national zero-emission bus transition goal?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you for that. You know, the more we give people alternatives for getting around, the more we've got to consider how all of them can be zero emission. Obviously, for privately owned vehicles, there is a lot going on electrifying those. But as we create more transit opportunities, as you are saying, it is real important to make sure that those buses and other transit assets are low or no emissions as well. And I would want to look a little more at the consequences and implications of the timeline you are describing, but I certainly believe that this is the time for us to have ambitious goals in how every mode gets to zero carbon, and transit has got to be a big part of that story.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Well, thank you, Mr. Secretary. And also thank you for mentioning sustainable aviation in your opening remarks. I just, I want to make you aware that I introduced the Sustainable

Aviation Fuel Act legislation to help spur large-scale production of sustainable aviation fuel, which I believe is crucial to the aviation industry's efforts to decarbonize.

DOT has led sustainable aviation fuel, R&D efforts through the ASCENT Center of Excellence, the CLEEN Program, the Volpe Center, and sponsorship of the Commercial Aviation Alternative Fuels Initiative resulting in seven approved pathways for SAF production and more in the pipeline.

Now that SAF is ready for widespread commercialization because of DOT's efforts, what policies can DOT put in place to assist with deployment, help scale the SAF industry, and ensure that we can decarbonize the aviation sector given that SAF is widely considered the most significant near-term means of reducing emissions in the aviation sector?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I agree with you that SAF is the most significant near-term means available to us. It is not like surface transportation where electrification is already in line for widespread adoption. And I think the key word is the word that you used, which is "scale." We know that in order for this to truly be economical for carriers and ultimately for passengers, we would have to be at a more advanced scale than we are right now.

I am trying to assess how much of that can be achieved through further developments in the research space versus what we can do in terms of market-making investments that might be supportive of getting closer to that critical mass that would allow SAF to really mature as a market, and then, eventually, we would hope to be in a position where they can be adopted without any policy thumb on the scale. But we know that is a long way off.

So we are open about different approaches to get it done and agree with you that there is no time like the present for America to be leading in that regard.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Well, I hope you will take a look at my bill. The bill certainly addresses research and development but also ways in which we can begin to scale now versus 10 years from now. So I hope you take a look at it, and I would love to work with you on it, on this specific area.

So, last, in my few minutes that I have left, I am sure you are aware of the Department of Energy's program to promote American manufacturing of zero-emission vehicles. It is the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Program. It is designed for light-duty vehicles. Congressman Debbie Dingell and I have a bill to include medium- and heavy-duty trucks to this. And so I am curious to know if you engaged with Secretary Granholm to discuss how DOT and DoD can collaborate on transportation and energy issues like ATVM.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I have had some great conversations with Secretary Granholm because we, I think, mutually recognize that our goals rely on what the other is doing. Certainly, from a grid perspective, we are going to need enhancements to the grid for any kind of easy adoption to be as widespread as we had hoped, whether it is on the medium- or heavy-duty side or on the light-duty side. We also know that an electric vehicle is only as clean as the power that goes into it, and that is another reason why we need to be collaborating. So we will welcome further opportunities to think about

that and work on it in an integrative way and are very responsive to your push to make sure we are contemplating not just privately owned vehicles but the future of those heavy-duty vehicles as well.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

And I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. LaMalfa, you are recognized.

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And congratulations, Mr. Secretary, on your new role here. A lot of excitement I am sure for that. And so I just have a couple of thoughts I want to get with you here on. Some of my colleagues touched earlier on the export containers and the crisis we have right now in this country with [inaudible] fix that situation, you know, because we have a lot of products—we want to be an exporter as well in this country. Here in California where we have a really strong agricultural industry, it is important we have the opportunity to export these crops. And it has to be very timely as well. We have a lot of electronics and other hard goods that we need to export, but they don't quite maybe have the time urgency as a crop. You pick a blueberry, you have got a window of time to get it to market. So what kind of urgency can you place on resolving this issue of not just having—they seem to be able to make more money by a container coming from China, offloading, and immediately going back than the amount of time it takes to fill with American-made and American-grown products.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, this is a concern and one that I think has reached a new level of urgency given some of the backups that we have seen, especially in the Northwest, but really impacting the whole U.S. economy. I know that there aren't easy fixes, but we need to be sure that we are doing everything we can on our side to be supportive.

So I will be consulting with the Maritime Administration to look at ways we can address, certainly, the backups we are seeing at the ports, as well as I think looking at the broader supply chain concern. I know this is a priority for the President. And, you know, the more we can have a supply chain that is resilient to these kinds of things that are happening, supply shock shortages and so forth, the stronger I think we will be overall in weathering any of those kinds of temporary economic conditions that seem to be getting in the way.

Mr. LAMALFA. [Inaudible.] So, in order for—if this comes about, to have this somehow be equitable, do you anticipate that the reasons for this are to ensnare the electric vehicles that currently aren't paying, or is this a net revenue increase for governments by adding this to the other taxes that already exist? Do we see that [inaudible].

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I am sorry. I am afraid there is an audio issue on my side, and your question got chopped up. Do I understand correctly you are asking about the revenue effects of a vehicle-miles traveled fee?

Mr. LAMALFA. Yeah. We have a very rural district. It is a lot of miles traveled in order to get to our resource-based jobs.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I see.

Mr. LAMALFA. And so the bottom line is this is going to hit our rural, depressed economy areas pretty hard for just regular people.

So will the vehicle mileage tax in your view replace gas tax and other things, or will it be an additional tax that is going to increase the burden on, whether it's truckers, or small businesses or families, how do we envision that? I know that part of the idea is to [inaudible].

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I understand. Yes. The intention is not to pile one fee on top of another. Rather, I think what is really driving this is just the awareness that as vehicles become more fuel efficient or move off gasoline entirely, we need to make sure that if we're on a user-fee system, that they are somehow paying in. The gas tax was the simplest way to have a user fee because we used to know for a fact that the more you drove, the more gas you used. Now, obviously, it's not that simple.

But I'm very attuned to the concerns you're raising about equity and about the burden that could be placed on rural communities. I think that's really a question of policy design. There are a lot of ways we could structure it or think about setting it up, whether it's a rebate mechanism or some kind of phase-in or something else to make sure that it's not disproportionately hurting those who are already hard hit.

Mr. LAMALFA. [Inaudible] track how many miles are going into a database, or do people have the option to just, do you anticipate, to just write it down and send it in, or something that you punch in at the gas pump? Even that, you know, I think a lot of people really are concerned about their privacy of where they go and what they do and not have to be tracked for all that. What do you think about that aspect?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I recognize that concern, and I think that is one of the things that we have got to work through. It is one thing to have an electronic logging device for a commercial trucking company. It is another for a private citizen to be assessed based on how much they drive. So some concepts are more odometer-based. Some are more GPS-based. But whatever we come up with, if we are going to move in this direction, has to be sensitive to those privacy concerns.

Ms. NORTON. I recognize now Ms. Wilson of Florida. Is Ms. Wilson available?

Then I will move on to Mr. Payne. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Secretary, it is good to see you again. And I appreciated the call we had earlier this week. And as chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, I have vested interest in resolving the tremendous backlog of rail infrastructure projects. Chief among them is the Gateway Program, and I know you are going to hear this several times from members on this committee. It is becoming a matter of redundancy. And so, hopefully, we can get your support on this. And I look forward to touring the current tunnel with you soon to show you the needs to critically be replaced.

Can I get an assurance that you will move expeditiously to resolve all outstanding delays in getting the tunnel built?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly. We know that it is of such importance to the region and really to the whole country because of how much economic activity passes through those tunnels. So I can

update you a little bit more than I was able to say before by adding that FRA is working with all of the Federal and State agencies who are involved in those regulatory pieces that are at stake and had been meeting over the last few weeks with the principals from all the relevant project partner agencies so that we can make sure those environmental processes are being met promptly. And also on the other side, the funding side, making sure that everything that is needed by way of the CIG program is also being met.

Mr. PAYNE. Great. And that segues me into my next question, you know, unlike—we discussed this earlier this week too. Unlike other transportation sectors, rail does not have a dedicated and reliable stream of funding. That has left major critically necessary infrastructure projects reliant on the annual appropriations process to find out if they will get any funding. What would be the benefits of a dedicated funding source for major rail projects?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, as you point out, we have a dedicated Highway Trust Fund. We have a trust fund for supporting our airports, but we don't have that on the rail side. And if we had the kind of dedicated and predictable funding source that you are describing, I believe we would make a big difference to the ability to plan and make responsible and strategic infrastructure decisions when it comes to the future of rail.

Going to that kind of year-by-year process really subjects rail to the varying winds of what is going on in Washington when, by its very nature, we are talking about very long-term planning, and a dedicated and sustainable and predictable funding source could make a very big difference in that regard.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. [Inaudible.] One of my priorities is ensuring that everyone has a fair shot at contracting work on these projects and a level playing field. This includes DBEs who have suffered historic systematic discrimination. I was shocked to hear that the Federal Railroad Administration does not have a DBE program. Yet the other modal administrations do. I understand that equity is a top priority of yours. Why is it important to you and the President to have these DBEs involved in these projects?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, it is important as a matter of fairness, and it is important as a matter of economic strength, and it is important when we consider that sometimes U.S. transportation policy in the past has, frankly, actively harmed racial and economic justice in this country.

When we are spending taxpayer dollars, we've got to make sure those dollars go to workers and companies that reflect the American people, all of the American people. And that is why supporting DBEs is so important.

So we are going to be working, as you said, with this as a major priority during my time here. And structurally that will certainly include reinforcing the DBE program as a Department as a whole and may also mean doing more specifically within the modes to make sure that they are able to meet that priority.

Mr. PAYNE. Well, hopefully, we can get a commitment that DBE programs at the FRA will uphold the principles when one is created. And I will yield back. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. [Inaudible] I didn't know if the Secretary had an answer to that question about the Federal Railroad Administration.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Let me just reiterate my commitment. We will absolutely make sure that FRA investments, as with investments across DOT, are robust in being directed as much as we can beef up in a way that is equitable. And, by the way, let me just make one other brief point on this. I also think we have a responsibility as a Department and as a Government to build up the capacity of DBEs to begin with. We know there are DBEs who are there but aren't certified. We know there are some that are in formation but have been disadvantaged from even being able to get there in the first place. And I do not regard it as an acceptable excuse for underutilization to be able to say the businesses weren't there in the first place because that simply begs the question of why. And we ought to make sure there are more businesses up and running to begin with.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I asked a question about DBEs as well. So I can't understand why any Department would be left out of the DBE requirement.

Mr. Westerman, you are recognized.

Mr. Mast, you are recognized.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, I appreciate it.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being with us. I am wondering if infrastructure gets broadband [inaudible].

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. As if to prove the point, I am having a little trouble hearing you, yeah, but it is a reminder of how far we have got to go.

Mr. MAST. We will try to work our way through it. Listen, I have enjoyed hearing the testimony. You have made it very clear that environmental justice, it is a top priority for the infrastructure package. You have spoken about it in terms of climate change and rising oceans.

You just testified to Mr. Bost just a few minutes ago that waterway infrastructure does fit into the President's agenda. And I was glad to hear you speak about that as well. I wanted to ask a little bit more specifically on that. Would you say that improving water quality is a component of achieving the administration's environmental justice goals?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly. If you can't take for granted that you can get a glass of clean, safe drinking water out of the tap when you are starting your day, that your family is going to be safe, then that wrecks so many other things in your life. And so we have got to make sure everyone can count on superior water quality.

Mr. MAST. Absolutely. And, you know, we have seen issues in Flint and other places, not just in terms of the drinking water, but also water that goes into the communities and homes, the backyards, the canals, the estuaries, and other places. Would you say that that would be a critical component to achieving the administration's environmental justice goals?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly.

Mr. MAST. Very good. Just glad to hear you say it. You said it as simply as it could be said.

Do you also agree that water quality infrastructure, maybe as it relates to, say, Everglades infrastructure, that could be an exam-

ple, should be a feature in the administration's infrastructure package?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly, all areas of the country need to be served well. I want to take care that I might be wandering out of my lane a little bit knowing that a lot of the waterways are a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers matter, but certainly the administration as a whole cares a lot about this. And to the extent this does touch on Department of Transportation equities, we are eager to support that.

Mr. MAST. I don't appreciate that at all, because I am trying my best to help you veer out of your lane. So, you know, you are—so in that, no, I do appreciate your candidness with my questions.

Just one other question, and this is opinion, and I understand that it is not exactly your lane, but it is important for somebody at your level in the administration and to just ask this [inaudible] the Federal Government has a right to poison its citizens?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Could I ask you to say that one more time? I'm sorry, it broke up again.

Mr. MAST. Absolutely. It was to follow on with this, in the same line of questioning. Do you believe that the Federal Government has any right whatsoever to poison its citizens?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Of course not.

Mr. MAST. Thank you for your testimony.

And, Madam Chairwoman, I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman yields.

I next call on Mr. Lowenthal.

Mr. Lowenthal, you are recognized.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Chairwoman.

And thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, for joining us. You have been wonderful and honest and open about your answers. And I thank you for laying out an ambitious agenda that supports critical and national priorities, such as an integrated multimodal freight network to support our economy, the bold action that you have laid out on climate change, and critical investments in transit.

For me, what I would like to emphasize more is the critical importance of heavy-duty vehicle electrification. You know, medium- and heavy-duty trucks are responsible for one-quarter of the U.S. transportation emissions. Globally, heavy-vehicle emissions, unfortunately, throughout are rising. And eliminating these emissions is possible, which will be transformative for communities like mine.

I represent the Port of Long Beach, a wonderful port complex, part of the L.A.-Long Beach complex. But all around the ports in my district, they are frontline communities where diesel pollution is still, even though the ports have done an amazing job of try and reducing it, is still an enduring challenge, and where the costs of climate change are extremely high. But what I have heard in talking to the people and in the ports and others in the transportation industry, transforming these vehicle fleets and building out the necessary infrastructure is going to take time, it is going to take effort, and it is going to take Federal support.

Although, as we all know, efficient freight movement is absolutely critical, but it does present unique technical problems. So, for example, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have estimated that it will cost \$14 billion to accomplish their clean air ac-

tion plan goals, which they are very proud of, to move to zero-emission cargo handling equipment by 2030 and zero-emission harbor trucks.

Mr. Secretary, I know you have answered this in part, but I would like to hear again what you see as the administration's priorities in deploying zero-emission freight and how we move to zero-emission freight.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you for raising this. The decarbonization of freight is no less important than the decarbonization of passenger travel. And as you point out, it is especially relevant in a port perspective. So when we are talking about maritime emissions, a lot of times we are thinking about the ships, and of course we want to see improvements in the emissions of ships, but so much of it is in trucks and the other vehicles and infrastructure that are around those ships as they come into port. And that can have tremendous implications for environmental justice and for the well-being of communities.

So from a particulate matter pollution perspective, as well, of course, as a carbon and climate perspective, we have got to make sure that we are pursuing all of the above. That includes mode shifting, so when possible, to make sure that each piece of cargo is on the most emissions-responsible mode that it can be that is appropriate to that particular piece of cargo and where it is headed across water, rail, roadway, et cetera. And it is also about making sure that each of those has the right kind of technology.

Certainly, take the point again that no matter how good we get at making sure that the cars that you or I might drive in are electrified, we have got to be pursuing similar goals when it comes to those heavy-duty vehicles in order to truly be responsible and in order to meet the goal of a net-zero economy by 2050.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I would like to ask another question. Do you see hydrogen fuel cell technology as promising here with heavy-duty trucks?

It seems that these technologies are important if we want to resolve concerns about range, charging time. But there are technical hurdles, such as the kind that we have not talked about in terms of infrastructure, you know. Charging stations, we have. But we don't spend a lot of time dealing with hydrogen, so it is complicated. And so I am just wondering what role you see for hydrogen in terms of heavy-duty trucks.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I view it as promising. And as you know, the small amount of hydrogen fueling capability we have in the U.S., much of it is in California. And I think—

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Right.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG [continuing]. We need to follow those developments. And we should encourage an all-of-the-above strategy in terms of moving towards zero-emission technology, because we never know where the breakthroughs might lie. But we are driven most of all by the outcome more than the inputs. But we recognize that there is a Federal role in terms of research and in terms of policy support for these promising technologies to develop in the first place.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you. And I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Balderson is recognized.

Mr. Balderson.

Mr. BALDERSON. Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. You are recognized, sir.

Mr. BALDERSON. Yes, Madam Chairman. Thank you. I am just pulling up my questions here.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for joining us, and congratulations on your appointment, and look forward to working with you as a fellow Midwesterner moving forward.

So my first question is—Mr. Secretary, first, I would like to congratulate you. And my—

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thanks.

Mr. BALDERSON [continuing]. District includes portions of Columbus, Ohio, which is by far the fastest growing city in the Midwest over the past decade, as well as suburban neighborhoods and farming and rural communities. Each of these communities in my district have their own distinct transportation challenges. In my district, private partnerships have played a crucial role in improving the region's infrastructure and preparing central Ohio for the future.

In 2016, Columbus was awarded funding as the winner of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Smart City Challenge. Through partnerships with the business community and stakeholders such as the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Transportation Research Center, Ohio State University, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and the Central Ohio Transit Authority and more, that initial funding from the Department has grown into a \$500 million effort to improve the region's transportation services. We call this partnership between private industries and the business community "The Columbus Way," and I believe it can serve as a model for the rest of the Nation.

Mr. Secretary, what role do you see the public-private partnerships play in rebuilding America's infrastructure? And what will the Department of Transportation do to ensure rural America, who might not have these same opportunities to bring in private capital, aren't left behind?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thanks for that question. And having been a mayor at the time, I will tell you that many cities across America looked with admiration, as well as maybe a little envy, at Columbus' success in that Smart City Challenge. And really part of what led to that success was, of course, those partnerships—public, private, regional—recognizing that there were so many stakeholders who needed to be on the same page.

I think the best Federal policies are those that recognize that, that incentivize and encourage that kind of cooperation. And that is something we will certainly be taking a view toward as more opportunities emerge.

There are some areas where there is no substitute for federally led and federally funded investment. But anytime that we can be leveraging private dollars or just making the right kind of public investments that then have a multiplier where the private sector will respond, in my experience, that is where we get the most bang for our buck. And I am certainly eager to see more opportunities like that develop.

Quickly with regard to your point about rural areas. Often smaller communities and rural communities don't have access to the same kinds of resources in pursuing Federal support, can't afford to have a full-time Federal relations expert on staff and so on. That is why we need to make our processes as user friendly as possible, and also reward regional cooperation in rural areas so that smaller communities can band together to get the resources they need.

Mr. BALDERSON. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

My next question is, I was concerned about that under the transportation title of the American Rescue Plan, we spent over \$30 billion for transit agencies, but didn't provide any funding for traditional highway infrastructure programs. The pandemic's economic impact on State departments of transportation have been significant with one estimate saying that State DOTs will need an additional \$18 billion through fiscal year 2024 to fill the budget gaps left by COVID-19.

How will the administration and the Department of Transportation work with State DOTs to address this backlog of important projects?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, State DOTs often are among our most important partners when it comes to where the actual work gets done, you know. Of course, we guide dollars out and then somebody has to actually make sure that they are used responsibly. Often that falls to a State DOT. Of course, the Rescue Plan and the COVID relief packages were mainly focused on directly addressing those kinds of revenue shortfalls that we saw, some of which was targeted directly at those transit agencies. But I do want to note that that category of State and local funding has some flexibility in it that I do think can be used to support, to a significant degree, those road budgets that have been impacted.

Of course, there is no substitute for addressing our backlog, which becomes, by its nature, more expensive each passing year. And that is part of what I hope that we have an opportunity to address now with that once-in-a-generation infrastructure action that could be happening on our watch.

Mr. BALDERSON. All right. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. Look forward to working with you.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. DeSaulnier.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, thank you so much. I will tell you, this is the most coherent testimony I have ever heard from a graduate of Harvard or at least that I could comprehend. And I do want to join with my neighbor here in the bay area, Mr. Huffman, in shamelessly inviting you to the area.

Sorry, I got a little bit of background [inaudible]. Sorry, Madam Chair. There was a little background there.

So I wanted to talk to you about three subject areas. And first is, we have—well, first, I wanted to say in response to some of the comments by some of my colleagues about California's ZEV mandate, I served on the California Air Resources Board for a decade. I was appointed by two Republican Governors and a Democratic Governor. The ZEV mandate, we are very proud of, I would argue

that over the course of 40 years—and it was originally implemented by a conservative Republican Governor, Governor Deukmejian. And, of course, the California waiver is important to us in the transportation and energy field and the climate field. And, of course, the authorship there were by Republican Presidents Nixon and Reagan, and the California waiver is so important to the transportation sector if we are going to transition.

So I want to talk to you about transition. The county I represent has four refineries in it. It has good paying, union mostly, but non-union can compete if they can pass the California apprenticeship standards, which are very high, best in the world, I would opine, perhaps behind the Germans, and it has resulted in the fuel industry for transportation being the cleanest in the world, with our low-carbon standard, fuel standard, and also the safest, and also economically one of the best and most reliable for the west coast.

So that mandate is important, vis-a-vis the Chinese, because in the next decade, I firmly believe from my background that we will have an alternative fuel car, either fuel cells by the Japanese probably or battery electric, hopefully by Americans, but it could be by the Chinese. As you know, Mr. Secretary, when there is a \$25,000, \$30,000 mass-produced alternative fuel car, the world will change. And to borrow Daniel Yergin's experience, maybe not appropriate, whoever gets there first has got the commanding heights of energy for the next century, I would argue.

So getting those good jobs to follow this energy source and infrastructure is important. Now, I have three bills I have shared with the chair and the chairs of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Education and Labor that we are working on that would help facilitate that. On the renewable portfolio standard in California that has been wildly successful, including financially, the VC money that has come to California has been very strong in this regard, but we brought the labor force with it. It is much more difficult on the fuel side.

So I would love to be able to have a conversation with you about, not just our legislation, but coordinating between DOE—we have got two national labs here in the East Bay that are doing great work with DOE funds now and we are trying to get more on carbon capture, but also this transition, the labor institutes, and the transportation schools. But to get EPA and the Energy, Transportation, and the Labor Departments to all work together so we don't leave people behind. These are good-paying jobs that have, for every 1 of them in these refineries, they have multipliers of 14. So we would like to talk to you about that. And I would be interested in your opinion, and you alluded to it in your testimony.

And then just briefly the importance of commuter rail and high-speed rail in California. We need a world-class passenger rail system that is fueled from well to wheel by alternative and renewable fuels through the whole connection. So mega commutes are a big issue in exurban and suburban areas. We would like to work with you in geographically constrained quarters, like here in the bay area, certainly DC, Boston, other metropolitan areas, New York, because we have to build that out.

And then lastly, on high-speed rail. Although I have been a supporter, I have been critical of project management. I think it is

really important that we work with you to get this right. California needs high-speed rail, but it has got to be done in a way that it invests in the corridors where we need it most, in Los Angeles and San Diego, in the bay area and the valley. And brings in the private sector because of the model. So I will stop there. Any response to those areas I would appreciate.

[Audio malfunction.]

Mr. DESAULNIER. I am lost in space like Mr. Cohen.

Ms. NORTON. He can respond to the record. The time has expired in any case.

And I go now to Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you.

And good afternoon, Secretary Buttigieg. It is good to see you again, sir.

A safety concern of mine is foreign aviation repair stations and the fact that the FAA-certified stations in the U.S. must meet a different set of standards compared to those stations abroad.

Sir, Congress has twice directed the FAA to address the current gaps in regulation that would have allowed for this two-tiered system to develop. I was curious, sir, how quickly can we expect the Department to close these gaps and establish one level of safety for aircraft maintenance?

[Audio malfunction.]

Ms. NORTON. We have a little difficulty. We are waiting for the Secretary's response.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Chair, could I ask for my time be reclaimed so I could rephrase the question?

Ms. NORTON. Go ahead, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Chair, is the Secretary back?

STAFF. Not yet. We can give him the full 5 minutes so it is—

Ms. NORTON. Not yet. You will get your full 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Secretary, are you there? Did you hear the question?

Due to technology difficulty, we will try to get the Secretary back. And we will give Mr. Fitzpatrick his full time back.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Secretary, are you there yet?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. [No response.]

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Secretary, we may be able to hear you if you turn off your video. Try that, Mr. Secretary.

We are reconnecting the Secretary, so we are pausing for another minute. We will be back. We shall return.

Mr. CARBAJAL. We need to provide better broadband to the Federal Government.

Ms. NORTON. Is the Secretary back yet, and did he hear the question?

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Well, Salud can answer for the Secretary. We don't need the Secretary.

Mr. CARBAJAL. We are still live, Mr. Lowenthal. We are still live. But what a boost of confidence. I am impressed.

Ms. NORTON. We don't even know if the Secretary heard the question.

We will start over as soon as he returns. We will pause for a moment. We shall return.

Are we able to get the Secretary back yet? We will be back shortly. Technological difficulties.

We could take the Secretary on audio, even though we don't see the picture.

Can you hear us, Mr. Secretary?

We will continue to pause.

It is Mr. Fitzpatrick's time while we are pausing.

We see the Secretary's seal, but we can't see him yet. We apologize for the difficulties.

Can you hear us at least, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. The Chair is asking if I can hear her.

I am here. Are you able to hear me?

Ms. NORTON. All right. We will proceed. Did you hear Mr. Fitzpatrick's question?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Unfortunately, no. I got as far as the previous question, but not to Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Ms. NORTON. So we will call—Mr. Fitzpatrick, we will start your time over. You are recognized, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you.

And good afternoon, Secretary Buttigieg. It is good to see you again.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Good afternoon.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. First, a safety concern of mine is foreign aviation repair stations and the fact that FAA-certified stations in the U.S. must meet a different set of standards compared to those stations abroad. Sir, as you are aware, Congress has twice directed the FAA to address the current gaps in regulation that have allowed for this two-tiered system to develop. So my question would be, how quickly can we expect the Department of Transportation to close these gaps and establish one level of safety for aircraft maintenance?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So I recognize the importance of this and understand that there is impatience and frustration on this topic. We have heard a lot about this from aviation stakeholders. As you know, the FAA has very rigorous processes here and then has agreements with other aviation authorities globally to ensure safety, and that is supposed to ensure the oversight of repair facilities within those countries. But when those other countries have different rules or regulations, that can be out of synchrony with our own. And one of the challenges that we are working through is how to apply the U.S. standards throughout the global community in a way that is consistent with any of the sovereignty issues or law issues that come up.

I am certainly following this closely. I know, again, there is a sense of urgency to do something here. And we will make sure to provide the committee with updates as we have more information.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, sir. With rapid new technologies in our transportation systems, I know that is something that has been raised by you and the administration. And I also know you share our belief that our frontline workers must benefit from the new technologies. What steps is the Department planning on taking to

make sure that this new technology will be deployed in a way that advances our current workforce?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I think it starts with having those workers represented at the table as these decisions are taking place. So we have tried to have a robust conversation from the very beginning with those who really are going to feel a lot of the impact, opportunities, but also threats and challenges because of these technologies emerging.

What success looks like is for there to be more jobs that are just as good paying, and from the administration perspective, just as likely or more to be unionized or pay prevailing wage, as there have been with the previous technology. And I don't think anyone is asking us to be in the way of technology, but there is a real concern about how it is going to develop. To me, that is as much about maintenance as it is about what is going on in the manufacturing and deployment of these technologies. And we should be ready, I think, with resources to help people across any of the transitions that might have to happen.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you. And lastly, sir, secondary flight deck barriers were mandated by the FAA reauthorization in 2018 for new passenger aircraft only, yet there is still no timeline for when that mandate will come into effect. And myself and Josh Gottheimer recently reintroduced H.R. 911, a bipartisan bill that will apply to all commercial passenger aircrafts. Hopefully, sir, we can count on your support to be supportive of this critical safety measure. One of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. I am asking if you would consider working with us on that issue?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. I am committed to implementing this legislation and all safety legislation to the maximum extent possible consistent with the timelines that are laid out.

I know that FAA is currently drafting the proposed rule based on recommendations that have come in from their Aviation Rule-making Advisory Committee. And I believe that draft rule is set to go out for public comment later this year. We will make sure to be in touch with you about progress there. And I, again, want to restate my commitment to making sure that we are complying with congressional intent.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Yeah. We appreciate that, Mr. Secretary. All three of those issues are very important, secondary barriers obviously, and 9/11 Commission recommendation yet to be implemented. It is a bipartisan initiative. We look forward to working with you and your administration on this.

Lastly, before I yield back my time, sir, one request. In the infrastructure proposal that you put forth, my request is that you include airports themselves in that infrastructure package. I know they haven't been mentioned much at all. I am sure that is not intentional, but that is rebuilding out our airport infrastructure is critically important. A lot of urban and suburban areas really depend on that as far as economic growth. So I would ask that you consider including airports in your package, sir.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. The national airspace may not be as tangible as roads and bridges, but it is part of our infrastructure and the airports are the most tangible part, so certainly recognize the importance of that.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Carbajal, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And congratulations and welcome, Secretary Buttigieg. I am very grateful for your appointment.

I want to start by saying a robust infrastructure bill needs to have bold investments in order to get our infrastructure to a state of good repair. This includes funding to fix our roads, bridges, schools, airports, increase broadband access, help with housing needs, and support transit and water infrastructure.

Not only will this help the American people across the Nation, but it can also be a jobs bill. If we do it right, this can help us recover from the economic shortfalls that resulted from this pandemic. This will be a win-win for the American people.

While our committee does not have total jurisdiction over offsets, paying for this bill will include a number of financing options. One option that I think has a lot of merit and worthy of consideration is a national infrastructure bank. This is something I have worked on, and I have introduced a bill to establish a national infrastructure bank. As a matter of fact, my staff has shared it with your team. I also know that Representative DeLauro and others have worked for a long time on moving this same concept forward.

I know you touched on this earlier, but can you please expand on the importance of establishing an infrastructure bank as an additional financing tool?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you. And I want to applaud your initiative on ensuring that there are as many financing tools as possible to make sure we are mobilizing all the resources we can for that bold infrastructure vision that we share.

The idea of the national infrastructure bank has, I think, been through many different proposals or versions in terms of what has been discussed in public. And I know that you and others have put more specific legislative shape to it. I think you will find the administration has a very open mind about the kinds of concepts that exist for creating more of that financial leverage.

Of course, we have within the Department the Build America Bureau that has instruments like TIFIA and RRIF and that private activity bond mechanism I mentioned earlier, that I think can be a great starting point. But the ambition of what you are describing, I think, goes to another level. And we would love to explore ways that we could be doing things above and beyond what we have had in the past when it comes to mobilizing those kinds of resources.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Last week, we heard from business leaders who made the case that tackling climate change and growing our economy go hand in hand. H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, that I and my colleagues on this committee helped write under the leadership of Chairman DeFazio, included several provisions to build our infrastructure for the 21st century that includes electric charging stations and hydrogen fueling infrastructure.

Can you delve further on what some of the administration's priorities are in terms of tackling climate change and how electric charging stations and hydrogen fueling infrastructure can be part of the solution?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, when it comes to incentivizing Americans to adopt electric vehicles, we know that one of the biggest reasons somebody would think twice before acquiring one is wondering whether it has got enough range to get them where they need to be. That is why the President committed to a major expansion of electric vehicle charging stations in the U.S., and it is very much part of our emerging infrastructure vision.

Hydrogen fuel cells also hold great promise as a zero-emissions fuel source, though they haven't been adopted yet as widely and are not as likely, as of today, to be manufactured in the U.S. But again, there is a lot of promise and potential there.

We view that as going hand in hand with the ongoing process of reducing the cost of these because that, in turn, takes away the other main reason people would hesitate to switch, which is that it simply might cost more than traditional fuel. Again, that is changing too. But we need all of these things to happen at once. That is just the vehicle side.

More broadly, across surfaces, it is making sure that people have different alternatives, enhancing access to transit and transit-oriented development, and decarbonizing the maritime and aviation sectors as well. All of that has to happen at the same time if we are going to meet our goals, which, of course, failure is not an option when it comes to those goals.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. And lastly, we know that the recently enacted PIPES Act of 2020 modified the unusually sensitive areas U.S.A. mandates for the 2016 act, which would give PHMSA what it needs to finish its outstanding rulemaking. Additionally, the bill included a provision requiring a study on the installation of automatic and remote-controlled valves on existing pipelines located in sensitive areas.

Like the U.S.A.'s commercially navigable waters or high-consequence areas, pipeline safety measures are important to coastal districts like mine, where we have seen multiple oil spills, the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill and the 2015 Plains All American spill. Can I get your commitment to press forward to finalizing these pipeline safety measures once and for all and get them over the finish line?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. We want to make sure that we are following through on all of these pieces and appreciate the support from Congress to build up the resources in the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration so that we can meet that congressional goal.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. I call on, next, Mr. Burchett—I am sorry, Miss González-Colón who has come back, Miss González-Colón.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Can you hear me now?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes.

Ms. NORTON. I can hear you.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Thank you.

And congratulations, Secretary, for your confirmation. I am happy to hear you today.

And I will just go directly to two of the most important issues regarding Puerto Rico. And I am pleased that you, in a recent interview in January of this year, you support statehood for Puerto Rico, and we voted for statehood in November of last year.

So my first question will be, as you may know, Puerto Rico receives inferior treatment in terms of the highway funding through a block grant for our infrastructure needs. Under the current FAST Act extension, which is going to expire on September 30 of this year, the island has received roughly \$158 million annually, but of those, just \$117 million after the penalties.

H.R. 2, the INVEST in America Act, will raise that level to \$200 million for 4 years. However, when Puerto Rico becomes a State, recent analysis based on the Federal Highway Administration, six core criteria State formula funding for Puerto Rico, demonstrates that the island will receive roughly \$430 million annually if we become a State.

Based on this information, would you agree that Puerto Rico should be treated as a State in terms of changing and transferring Puerto Rico from a block grant to formula funding at the State level?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So it is very important to me and to the administration that U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico are treated equitably in every regard, and that certainly includes making sure that the flows of support for infrastructure reflect that.

I would want to make sure I get a better understanding of some of the numbers that you just reviewed. But just want to restate my commitment to making sure that there is parity and equitable treatment for fellow U.S. citizens on the island.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Thank you, Secretary. And will you have your staff provide technical drafting assistance to ensure this language can be included in the next surface transportation bill that Congress needs to pass, and we can work in that bipartisan way, not just with the committee, but with your office so we can discuss this in a further way?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. I will make sure to set up a conversation to see how we can be of assistance.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. The other issue that for us is very important, we have an exemption for the next 2 years from air cargo, from air cabotage laws. And this exemption is critical to turning Puerto Rico into an air cargo hub, not only to generate economic activity, but to take advantage of our robust manufacturing base, not just for sale of medical devices, but to diversify our economy and would put Puerto Rico and the United States in the global area in Latin America. And currently, Alaska has an exemption that has helped the Anchorage airport to the number three cargo hub in North America.

As Puerto Rico continues to address our financial situation, a report issued by the Census Information Center said that air cargo for Puerto Rico will have an impact of more than \$400 million in new direct and indirect economic activity. The last report of International Air Transport Association takes that into what could be a great demand for Puerto Rico and for Latin America as well.

In that sense, I just want your office to review a bill that is H.R. 1824, the Puerto Rico Air Cargo Industry Empowerment Act. And I would love your office to work with us in terms of looking ways to extend that waiver that we do have for 2 years to make it permanent, that we work with your office in that sense.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you for raising this. We will be sure to look at this and make sure to be responsive on looking at what could happen for the future.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. My last comment, Secretary, will be in terms of giving you an open invitation to visit Puerto Rico and to see the infrastructure needs after the hurricanes and seismic activity of the last 2 years. So I would be very glad if you can visit the island with the Governor to see firsthand the investment of Federal funds in our highways and funds that were approved by the Community Development Block Grant and FEMA.

So, with that, you have an open invitation for the island. And, again, thank you for supporting statehood for the island. I do support it. We voted for that in November of last year.

So I yield back, Madam Chair.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. The gentlelady yields back.

Mr. BROWN, I recognize Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. I want to thank you for visiting my district, the UPS facility, and the great work that they are doing in the vaccine distribution operation. I also want to thank you for meeting with the Greater Washington Partnership to discuss our shared vision for transportation in the National Capital region and the region between Richmond and Baltimore.

I also want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your commitment to a big and bold approach to our Nation's infrastructure and how that gives us a tremendous opportunity to create jobs, revitalize communities, meet the challenge of climate change, and ensure equity for all.

Equity in transportation requires transit to be a core component of big service transportation projects. Unfortunately, this has not been the case regarding a proposed project in my district and in the National Capital region, which is the State of Maryland's I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study project, the details of which you will soon receive from me and other Members of the Maryland congressional delegation in a letter.

And you will see that the MLS project has several deficiencies, including a lack of genuine consideration of transit options and phasing inconsistencies between the procurement process and the NEPA required plan environmental impact statement. I believe this project is based on a dated and inequitable approach to improve an infrastructure that is out of step with the Biden-Harris administration's modern vision.

My question, Mr. Secretary, in a large surface transportation project intended to alleviate congestion, can you briefly articulate the importance of having transit options as it relates to the administration's goals for promoting equity and addressing climate?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. And thank you for the question, because this is a scenario that really demonstrates how questions of efficiency, questions of climate responsibility, and matters of equity and environmental justice all come into play at the same time.

We have got to make sure that we are creating options and creating infrastructure that allow Americans of every background and at every income level to get to where they need to be. And transit is a very important part of that. Indeed, we want transit to be a means of choice for as many Americans as possible to efficiently be able to move around their area. But I have heard from many of your constituents and neighbors and will stand by to hear the forthcoming letter laying out these concerns in greater detail. Because we also know that a misguided investment can actually exacerbate the problem or it can be a temporary fix that doesn't really deal with the holistic issue of how people get around. As the chairman mentioned in his opening comments, there are cases where you can add a couple of lanes to a highway, only to find yourself in the same situation a few years later.

Now, I say that without prejudice to any individual project because, of course, it depends on the circumstances of the project. But we know across the board that the more robust options individuals have, the more ways there are to get to where you are going, the more freedom you have to have excellent transit options available to you, the better off you are going to be economically. And that also helps us reduce emissions in neighborhoods, disproportionately communities of color, that have often had highways and other projects go through them with an increase in pollution that comes with it.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, last month, you made a statement on a cable network, and I am paraphrasing, but you said the U.S. shouldn't have to settle for less than the rest of the world in high-speed ground transportation technology. Now we have got to get to the next level.

You referenced the high-speed rail technologies being developed in Japan. Now, I know from experience in my district that if these types of projects are going to occur, there has to be robust involvement as well as a commitment to equity and climate change goals [inaudible] the President's support that you just articulated.

I wonder if you might elaborate on the high-speed rail technologies that you are contemplating.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. Thank you. We see a ton of opportunity to extend prosperity and convenience for Americans through high-speed rail. But as you say, this has to be deployed in a way that takes community considerations into account. And too often, there is a troubling history in the U.S. of that not happening. Often that didn't happen with the Interstate Highway System, so now is our opportunity to get it right with future investments, whether we are talking about highway, rail, or any other mode.

A lot of the technology is already there. We know that because our counterparts in other countries enjoy it on a daily basis, can take it for granted even. And to my earlier comments, I just don't see why Americans should be expected to settle for less.

Mr. BROWN. And would you consider magnetic levitation technology as part of that vision for high-speed rail technology which should be considered?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. It would certainly hold to that potential. It is different from, of course, what we have deployed by and large in terms of what we do have by way of moving closer to high-speed rail. But when you consider the efficiency and climate possibilities there, it is certainly worthy of a good look.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. NORTON. For 5 minutes I call on Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Burchett, Chairlady. Thank you.

Ms. NORTON. Burchett. I am sorry.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, ma'am.

United States has a huge waste crisis, Mr. Secretary, and over 90 percent of recyclable plastics end up in our landfills. The United Kingdom is using recycled bottles as a binder in road construction as a substitute for oil. Do you support this innovative technology to reduce waste and improve our roadways? And I wonder if you support any other initiatives just like that.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I would love to learn more about that specific technology. And I am so appreciative you raising that question of how we—literally how we pave our roadways. You know, the way we do that looks, I think, a little too much like what it looked like 100 years ago. And there are so many possibilities in terms of recycled materials, in terms of lower emission solutions, even the possibility of carbon capture in certain kinds of cement. And something important in many communities like where I come from, permeable pavement solutions that allow water to pass through rather than having it run off, which can lead to a big savings and environmental benefit when it comes to wastewater and stormwater.

So for those reasons and more, I am very eager to see the U.S. leading when it comes to surfacing and pavement technologies and possibilities. I will make sure to learn more about the specific opportunity that you raised.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes. I suspect there are some environmental concerns with plastics, but I believe if you dig deep enough, some of those are probably being pushed by Big Oil. So you keep an eye on that, I would appreciate that.

The 2016 GAO report on highway safety titled “More Robust DOT Oversight of Guardrails” included recommendations to direct the Federal Highway Administration to establish a mechanism for third-party verification on crash test labs. These recommendations have not been fully implemented. They risk the integrity of roadside hardware like guardrails. Would you commit to working with my staff to update these crash test lab requirements and oversight?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I would. We want to make sure that, given that safety is our top priority, that that is something we are managing, not just with regard to the design of vehicles, but to the design of the roadways that those vehicles are on. And that means making sure that guardrails and any other relevant technology are keeping up with the times. Again, something that has evolved a great deal in terms of the safety capabilities. And needless to say,

on anything that has been prescribed by Congress, we want to meet those mandates and deadlines as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. BURCHETT. Great. There are currently 276 million vehicles on the road today, about 4 percent of those are electric. But if we transitioned each of these to a battery or electric, could the U.S. energy grid handle this new load?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So that is part of what we are working with the Department of Energy to make sure we are prepared for. There is going to be a lot of shift in the sources and distribution of load from a charging perspective and when you look beyond the vehicle opportunity, other uses of electricity in the U.S. And as we have seen most recently and upsettingly in the case of Texas, our electrical infrastructure is not always poised to keep up with the reality we are living in.

Ultimately, there is no reason America shouldn't be capable of powering every electric vehicle that we produce. But we do need to make sure that we have the right infrastructure to back up that aspiration.

Mr. BURCHETT. Right. So, currently, I guess the answer would be no, but the—and I appreciate that.

Current battery technology requires a minimum of 40 minutes, as you know, per parcel charge as opposed to gas-powered vehicles, or even a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle, which only requires 4 to 6 minutes. Has the Department studied the challenges asking consumers to accept such a drastic change in behavior?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, this is part of why I think we need a very well-designed electric vehicle charging network. On one hand, as you note, the current loading time or charging time for a vehicle is not comparable to what you get at the gas pump. On the other hand, electric vehicles can be charged right in your backyard in a way that, of course, none of us would want to install a gas pump in our backyard. So we really have got to recognize that there is going to be a balance of how charging happens that is not quite the same as what we are used to in terms of how fueling happens.

But at the end of the day, for long-distance travel, there need to be charge points along long-distance corridors, and that, I think, is one of the areas where Federal policy is going to play an important role.

Mr. BURCHETT. And I suspect technology is going to have to catch up to the—either that or they are going to have more or less, like, propane tanks, you just pull up and pull in and get a battery like you would a propane tank.

Recently, a DOT-sponsored study demonstrated that fully autonomous long-haul trucks can lead to more jobs, productivity, and economic growth. What concrete steps is the Department taking to promote safety and swift deployment for automatic driving technologies for trucking?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, right now, most of our safety regulations are built around the assumption that there is a human driver in the cab of the truck or in the seat of a passenger car. And it is something that really doesn't fully mesh with how these vehicles operate. For example, we might regulate where a mirror ought to go in a way that makes sense for a human driver but doesn't really

play the same role if we are talking about sensors rather than mirrors.

These are the kinds of things where policy is, in my view, behind where the technology is. We have lost something on the order of 40,000 lives on U.S. roadways. So we know that human drivers have not had the best track record when it comes to safety, but that doesn't make it automatic, so to speak, that an automated system is fully safe until we vetted that out. We need to make sure we are providing the kind of regulatory certainty and safety infrastructure for consumers and companies alike to know what to expect so that that kind of technology can meet its potential.

Mr. BURCHETT. On a different note, what current and future resources are available to the Department to establish minimum—

Ms. DAVIDS [presiding]. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. BURCHETT. I appreciate that, Chairlady. If you could ask—

Ms. DAVIDS. I would encourage you to submit a written—

Mr. BURCHETT. I will. But if you could ask leadership, and I will ask leadership in my party as well, if they could get us the proper bandwidth. This is probably, outside of voting on the actual bill, this is the most important thing we are doing.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. BURCHETT. It is embarrassing that we can't do these committees.

Ms. DAVIDS. OK. We are going to move on to the next set of questioning.

Mr. Malinowski, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good to see you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Likewise.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So a couple of my colleagues have already mentioned the Gateway project, and so I just want to start by thanking you for the work that you have already done. It is really great for us to have such a strong and true partner in recognizing that we need to replace this 110-year-old tunnel and the infrastructure around it. I am really grateful for the FTA's quick action in reversing that Trump-era policy that counted Federal loans as part of the Federal share of big projects, I thought that was an important step. And you have mentioned already today the need to get the environmental impact statement done. We also need to rewrite the project. So thank you for the work you are doing with our local and regional authorities.

I would say the only question that I would ask is, you know, barring unforeseeable events, would you say that these administrative steps that you are going through are steps that could be completed this year?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, I will tell you, when it comes to the updated environmental impact statement, knowing that obviously there is a lot of different players involved and FRA is working with the New Jersey Transit, the Port Authority and others on a detailed schedule, we intend for that part of the NEPA process to be complete in the second quarter of this year. So I know there are a lot of other hurdles and funding pieces in play, but I want to at

least share that much that we are very much hoping to meet that timeline.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. That is fantastic. We want to see the work getting done.

You have mentioned the economic importance of this project, not just to our region, but to the country. It is 20 percent of the national GDP and, you know, I would just ask all of us to imagine what would happen if the one railway tunnel that connects New York with everything south of New York were to disintegrate, which is what will happen if we don't replace it. So, again, thank you for your work on that.

And let me make a broader point. When we think about this project back in New Jersey, we are not just thinking about our daily commutes. There is something even more fundamental, I think, going on here, and that is a sense that the United States needs to build big things again and that we haven't been doing that in recent years. You mentioned the interstate highway program in your testimony. That was, in its time, a big and transformational project. It revolutionized how we get around in America.

Do you by chance know how much the Interstate Highway System costs in today's dollars just by comparison, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I want to say it is in the neighborhood of \$250 billion, but I am not sure if I have my inflation math right.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yeah. In today's dollars, it was about \$1.1 trillion. So we were thinking big then. And we did it, again, partly for highway safety and efficiency, but, in fact, Eisenhower said it was as important to our national defense as to our national economy. We were thinking about the Cold War at the time, and we wanted to show the world that America could do big and bold things. And here we are in 2021 and, arguably, the greatest predictable economic transformation in modern history is the transition to clean energy. So if we are going to do something big and bold, obviously, it would not be just redoing the Interstate Highway System.

Others have mentioned China. Let me just ask you, is the Chinese Government, in looking to compete with us, are they looking to compete with us in building highway overpasses or gas-powered pickup trucks?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I take your point. China or the United States will lead the transition to clean energy, and I want it to be the United States. And when it comes to big, bold vision more broadly, Chinese infrastructure averages about 8 percent of their GDP, and we expect that may increase. We are at 2.4 percent here in the U.S., and I believe it shows.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yeah. That is exactly, exactly right. I think someone else tried to needle you about a "China first" economic and climate policy. You know, if our inaction were to allow China to get there first, wouldn't that be a "China first" policy?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, it would literally mean China is first to lead the world in clean energy and in these transitions. And, again, I would much rather see America be the first in that regard. Why let China lead us in infrastructure? We should be leading the way.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, sir.
I yield back.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields.

Mr. JOHNSON from South Dakota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON OF SOUTH DAKOTA. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Mr. Secretary, thanks for being with us.

Before coming to Congress, I was a vice president and a co-owner of an engineering and consulting firm that did a lot of projects in rural America, particularly in the broadband arena. And we always estimated that Federal regulations added about 30 percent to the cost of the projects, and you get the math, that is 30 percent fewer families that would get connected with those broadband dollars. That is 30 percent fewer small businesses that would get connected with those broadband dollars.

I listened with interest to your point earlier that only 1 percent of projects undergo a full environmental impact statement review. I am concerned that statistic might obscure a little bit the substantial cost of delay because of Federal environmental review and other regulations. By comparison, I would note that Canada and Germany, on average, do large project environmental review in 2 years or less. In America, a full EIS by the Federal Highway Administration, the average length is about 7½ years. And obviously, those delays have real costs. One group estimates it at \$3.7 trillion of economic loss because of those delays.

So I loved your opening remarks, Mr. Secretary, where you talk about turning aspirations into action. And so I think, you know, my question would be, are there things that Canada or Germany are doing that are making it so much easier to put their aspirations into action? What can we learn from their speedy but thorough environmental review?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. You know, I think it is a great question, and I have challenged my team to look at exactly what you are describing. We are not the only country that has rigorous expectations for environmental review, and I think we should not hesitate to learn from others who have found a more expeditious way to do it. Of course, we have a unique Federal system where often local, State, and Federal authorities are all in play.

But what we know is that there is a real demonstrated need for a lot of these projects and time for all of these projects, and time is money. And so it is our intent to identify anything that is duplicative, anything that is done in seven steps that could just as well be done in four. Anything that is not meeting the intent or the needs of those laws on environmental or the other, of course, laws that are kind of under the sometimes misleading name of NEPA that are all considered as part of that review and try to make it as user friendly and as simple as possible. I agree that there is a concern about cost and time added to projects by review.

At the same time, I want to note that AECOM did a study recently on what was the number one reason why projects don't happen, and the number one reason is funding. My hope is that this can be both hand, that we can get the funding that is needed and make sure that we are acting to make sure that funding get outs efficiently.

Mr. JOHNSON OF SOUTH DAKOTA. Well, then, thank you, Mr. Secretary, for that. We do want to help you put those aspirations into

action. I would echo the comments of the gentleman from Alaska. I mean, we really want you to work with us. And I think this powerful rhetoric about bipartisanship and infrastructure, we have just got to figure out a way to make that happen. I, like a lot of my colleagues, I think, on both sides of the aisle, have, at times, in this new administration, been disappointed with maybe how bipartisanship is defined.

I will close in the last minute, Mr. Secretary, by just calling your attention—I know you pay attention to it—but calling your attention to the dire condition of infrastructure in Indian Country. And I will introduce into the record some photographs from Indian Country in South Dakota. This is from the Yankton Tribe, as an example [displaying photo on cell phone]. Others where roadways have completely fallen into the ditch, washed away [displaying photo on cell phone]. And I am looking forward to working with you to address some of these critically important rural infrastructure needs. Thank you for your time. And, Madam Chair, I yield back. If the Secretary has something he wants to add about rural highway funding, and in Indian Country, of course, Madam Chair, he can do so.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Just very briefly, let me embrace that important consideration. Part of being equitable is making sure that communities otherwise left out are getting the resources and attention they need. And that is certainly important when it comes to Tribal lands and rural communities, more generally.

Mr. JOHNSON OF SOUTH DAKOTA. Thank you, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Stanton is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Secretary, it is so good to see you again.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Same here.

Mr. STANTON. It seems like yesterday we were hanging out at mayor conferences together. So I am really glad that a great mayor is leading our Nation's Transportation Department. And as a local government leader, one learns very quickly the value of infrastructure to our economy, to our environment, our safety, our quality of life. During my time as mayor of Phoenix, I proposed and asked voters to approve the single largest transportation infrastructure plan in Arizona history, the first of its kind in scope in the Nation to exponentially expand public transit, including our light rail system and modernize our roadways.

And the voters of Phoenix said, yes, by an overwhelming margin. And one of the first things we did was invest in the extension of light rail into South Phoenix to connect transit-dependent individuals to new economic opportunities. Beyond that plan, we made other key infrastructure investments, including hundreds of millions of dollars to renovate Sky Harbor International Airport.

And what we both experienced as mayors, though, is that Congress hasn't always been the best partner when it comes to infrastructure. And so a major infrastructure package is essential for America and for Arizona. Arizona is the second fastest growing State in the Nation. And growing communities have growing needs, and that starts with transportation.

We need the Federal Government to support light rail through Phoenix, Mesa, Tempe, and beyond, and to support the construction of new highways, such as Interstate 11, and the expansion of existing highways, including Interstate 10.

The role of both the local and Federal Government is particularly important in Arizona, because State leaders have really fallen short when it comes to making infrastructure investment.

We also have significant aviation needs, not only Sky Harbor, but the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, which supports our region's fast-growing East Valley. And we must not forget the extraordinary needs of our Tribal communities, including the 22 Tribal nations in Arizona. Infrastructure investment on Tribal lands from the Federal Government has been woefully inadequate, as we saw in the "Broken Promises" report. Tribal infrastructure investment is mostly provided through the Tribal Transportation Program, yet Tribes are barely able to maintain their roads under the current investment levels, let alone invest in large-scale projects, like expansion of Arizona's I-10 that will improve safety and economic opportunity, on the Gila River in the community, or addressing more than 9,500 miles of unpaved roads on the Navajo Nation.

Mr. Secretary, it is great to have you at the helm of the Department. I look forward to working with you and hosting you in Arizona soon. I have a couple of questions. It is critical to ensure projects of national and regional significance receive Federal support. Section 1301 of the Moving Forward Act recognized the importance of these projects and the need for resources beyond the traditional Federal aid formula to make them a reality. Interstate 11, connecting Phoenix and Las Vegas is such a project. Completing the tier 2 environmental review is the necessary next step to advancing I-11 in Arizona.

So I am hoping, and I am asking you, can I count on your support to provide the Federal support necessary to complete the tier 2 environmental work for I-11 in Arizona?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. I have heard a great deal from you and your colleagues and your neighbors in Nevada, too, on the importance of I-11, and we want to make sure that all of those Federal processes happen as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you for that great answer. Next on transit, I appreciate your swift action to rescind the Trump administration's requirement that transit agencies provide an additional 10 percent of local funding under the Capital Investment Grant Program. In Phoenix, the Northwest Light Rail Extension program, it was awaiting engineering approval, when the Trump administration moved the goalpost and put their policy in place. And our local agencies, we did comply with that Trump administration requirement. Thank you for taking it away for future projects.

But now that your Department has rescinded this additional local cost-share requirement, what options do project sponsors have, like Valley Metro and the city of Phoenix, what options do they have to get Federal funding share for these projects restored?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. This is one thing we are going to continue reviewing in terms of all of our existing programs. We thought it was very important to change the guidance on that Dear Colleague

letter, because that was really a way to restore that statutory basis that all of those authorities had been planning on to begin with.

I think there is a lot more opportunity out there, depending on the particular proposal, using both our financing tools like TIFIA and RRIF, or grant tools. And I think that this is part of what we have, a great opportunity to expand with the kinds of legislation we are contemplating in this season.

Mr. STANTON. And one final question, Mr. Secretary. When we do light rail projects, they are great for the economy, but they also, for small businesses alone, the construction project, it sometimes can be difficult. And I want you to look at additional ways that the Department can support small businesses, particularly, minority-women-owned businesses that are impacted by light rail development in the future. It is something that would help my community and other communities that are making similar investments.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. We will make sure to do so. Thank you.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields. Mr. Van Drew is recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. VAN DREW. Thank you for appearing before the committee to testify on a subject of interest to all Americans. We are a country of many communities, with diverse perspectives. However, there is universal recognition that we must invest in infrastructure if we want to continue American strength and prosperity into the 21st century.

First, I want to tell you about my own community, the southern part of New Jersey. We are geographically, economically, and demographically a diverse community. We are the hustle and bustle of tourism and gaming. We are the pinelands and the wetlands. We are the Jersey Shore and the Delaware Bay Shore. We have miles of beautiful coastline, and we have thousands of acres of farmland. But we have a common identity of South Jerseyans together.

Mr. Secretary, our people need better infrastructure. We need investment in roads, bridges, and dams. We need investment in dredging, broadband, and airports. Investments of this bill could make a generational impact on the South Jersey community. I am sure that everyone else on this committee feels just as strongly about their community's needs.

That leads me to the main point I need to make: This bill needs to be an infrastructure package for all Americans. For years, Washington has talked about infrastructure as the end-all and the be-all of bipartisanship. Now, it is our opportunity to show that there is still an American Dream, and that our country can still unite behind it.

We cannot approach this bill like we have, quite frankly, earlier bills this year. There needs to be bipartisanship. There needs to be an investment in all American communities. Our country, the United States of America, needs us. They need us to work together.

So, Mr. Secretary, does this administration commit to making this an infrastructure package for all Americans?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, sir. That is absolutely the intent of the President and of my Department, too. We recognize there are so many different kinds of communities with different needs and different characteristics. And we've got to be serving everybody, and

everybody will be better off when we get this country the infrastructure it deserves.

Dr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. In order to make this an infrastructure package for all Americans, the bill must be bipartisan. If it is not, then the needs of tens of millions of Americans will be ignored in this process, and their problems will be exacerbated.

Mr. Secretary, while I understand that, ultimately, your congressional counterparts act of their own accord, are you committed to the position that this should be negotiated as a bipartisan infrastructure package?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, the President strongly prefers a bipartisan approach, and so do I. It has hopefully been reflected, as you have seen in the conversations that the President has hosted with Republican and Democratic Members of the House and Senate, and that is going to continue to be the way we want to proceed. We have got to get something done. And I think you don't have to be from one party or the other to see how important that is. And if there is any policy area left in America where Republicans, Independents, and Democrats can work together to get something done, I have to believe it is this one, because I have yet to see a Republican bridge or a Democratic pothole.

Dr. VAN DREW. So you are committed to that bipartisanship?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. That is certainly our goal, and we hope to work with you and Members on both sides of the aisle in good faith to get there.

Dr. VAN DREW. I hope we do. I hope we do because America is watching. And this is truly our chance to show America that we still, at least in some ways, can function. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I yield my time.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields. I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, for taking the time to join us today. It is always a pleasure to hear from a fellow, self-proclaimed, infrastructure nerd. As many folks know, I represent the Kansas Third Congressional District, and thanks to our central location, we are a major transportation and shipping hub for this country. And in my district, just like many across the country, we have roads, bridges, and highways that all are in critical need of update and expansion, highways like 69 Highway in Overland Park. And we also have transit agencies, like the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, who are staying on the cutting edge of public transportation with things like microtransit zero fare programs and innovative public-private partnership for our light rail system. These are the kinds of projects that are going to help keep our community safe and reduce congestion, while also bringing good union jobs and helping our small businesses that are really struggling right now.

And as a former Midwest mayor yourself, you know that these are also the kinds of projects that can help connect communities, and cities, and, frankly, our entire country.

In fact, Dwight D. Eisenhower, a fellow Kansan and the namesake for our State's IKE Transportation Program, was the architect

of our national interstate highway. We heard the chairman mention that earlier. And that really was the first time that we linked all of the areas of this country—urban, suburban, exurban, rural. And right now, we are still relying on that infrastructure, the infrastructure our grandparents built.

And under the leadership of the Biden administration and your leadership, we have the opportunity right now to build infrastructure that our grandchildren are going to be able to depend on and rely on. In fact, when we do that, we have to make sure that we are being intentional about the ways that we revitalize this infrastructure.

And, particularly, as we have heard over and over again today, far too often, there are communities that are left out. Because whether you are in an urban area, like Kansas City, Kansas, or out in our more rural areas like Stilwell, Kansas, in my district, everyone deserves access to transportation and infrastructure,

So, like many of my colleagues, before I get to my question, I do want to make sure that you know that you have a standing invitation to visit us in Kansas. Come to the Third Congressional District, you can see the opportunities and the needs of the district and, obviously, enjoy some of our Kansas City barbecue, which, in my opinion, obviously, unbiased opinion, is the best in the country.

And with that, I would like, Secretary Buttigieg, for you to share with us a bit about how you think that these new infrastructure investments can help link the diverse communities that we have been hearing about today?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you, first of all, for the invitation. I remember encountering somebody with a Kansas City Barbecue Society judge ID number tattooed on their calf, and it was then that I understood just how seriously that that is taken where you are from.

And I want to acknowledge and support what you are speaking to in terms of connectivity for everybody. We have got to make sure that the infrastructure investments we are, hopefully, about to make reach every kind of community, rural, Tribal, urban, suburban, and everything in between. And that means making sure there are adequate roadways. It also means making sure there are adequate alternatives that people can get to where they need to be, whether that is in a privately owned vehicle, or some other means of getting around.

We know there is troubling history of how that hasn't always happened, leaving people in transit and transportation deserts, isolating communities. This time around, I think we can do something very different, something that is no less transformational than previous investments like those of the Eisenhower generation that you mentioned, but also more inclusive, and more supportive of lifting up every American.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, Secretary. And I want to say thank you to you, to the Biden administration broadly. And also to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle today for bringing up the needs of our Tribal communities in Indian Country. It is so important, and has, for a long time, been overlooked. And also, in the interest of time, I want to say thank you again for joining us today.

I do have a question for you about Advanced Air Mobility, but I will go ahead and submit that to you in writing. And I am looking forward to working with you on what I hope will be the next generation of innovative infrastructure investment.

And with that, I will turn over to, Mr. Guest, it looks like you are back on. We will recognize you for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for taking time to join us today. I do, and I am glad to see in the statement that you submitted prior to your testimony where you say that you stand ready to work with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to deliver an infrastructure package that meets this consequential moment and ensures a future worthy of our great Nation. And I applaud you for that statement of bipartisanship. I believe that any infrastructure bill that ultimately passes out of Congress, if we are going to have the support that we need, it is going to require Republicans and Democrats working together, coming across the aisle.

And I believe that a crucial component of that involves the flexibility of spending. I am greatly opposed to a one-size-fits-all model. I believe that what works well in California, what works well in New York and Illinois will not work in Mississippi. Also, within the geographic confines of each State, I believe that what works well in one part of the State will not work well in the other.

And, so, I would encourage you to continue, as we are seeking bipartisanship, to harp on the message of flexible spending, to give money to the States, let the States decide then how that money should be best invested in infrastructure.

I want to talk very briefly about some of our livestock haulers. When I am home, I serve a very rural State. Mississippi is predominantly rural, and much of our economy is based on our farmers. And, so, when I am home meeting with our farmers, and I am home meeting with our livestock producers, they often talk about the challenges that they face as they are hauling animals and perishable goods across the country. Unlike many of the others that are involved in hauling nonperishable items, they are unable to pull off and stop on the side of the road once they reach some sort of hours-of-service deadline.

And, so, I would ask that you, that the administration would work with Congress as we are seeking to try to address the challenges surrounding this issue. This is an issue that is very near and dear to my farmers, very near and dear to my livestock producers, and I would ask you to work with us as we seek to find a long-term solution to this problem.

I also want to talk very briefly about what Dusty Johnson addressed earlier, and that is, involving permitting. When I am meeting with supervisors and mayors and elected officials, as we are talking about infrastructure projects, that we are seeking to begin construction here in my home State of Mississippi, I often get feedback about the length of time it takes from the time a project is drawn until we can actually begin construction.

We know that in many cases, the permitting process, the environmental requirements that are necessary to begin construction, on average, now take up to 7 years. And we know that that is, on

average, that some projects take decades for us to be able to get through the permitting process, and actually begin construction on those vital projects.

And, so, what I would like to do is, I would like to ask you to speak for a few moments about what you will do to reform and improve the current permitting process that often delays many crucial infrastructure programs.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, that has been my experience as well as a mayor, and I think any time you are responsible for delivering a project, you are impatient to actually see it go into the ground. And any time we can do something to remove an unnecessary step that would prolong that, we ought to be looking at that. And I think there is opportunity there.

Of course, we are not talking about cutting corners. These environmental and other regulations are there for a reason. But I think we can continue to meet the intent of those important rules, and allow for the community participation that comes by way of the NEPA process in ways that might be smoother, more user-friendly, and lead to more prompt project delivery.

So, I am very open to working with you and others to hearing more specific examples and ideas from those who are dealing with these permitting processes and coming up with the most flexible solutions that we responsibly can.

Mr. GUEST. Well, and you know from your prior position, prior to becoming Secretary, that when you are dealing with the Federal Government, the regulations required on Federal projects differ, in some cases, very drastically to those on State projects. And, so, what I would hope that the administration would work toward is we would work toward making sure that while we are protecting the environment, that we are also doing so in a manner that, very quickly and efficiently, brings these projects to fruition.

So, Mr. Secretary, thank you. I am out of time, so I yield back.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields back. And Mr. García is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCÍA OF ILLINOIS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Secretary Buttigieg, I know that many have already said it, but, again, let me thank you for testifying on the administration's priorities. And please know that there is an open invitation for you to come and visit the Fourth Congressional District of Illinois, and see what makes Chicago such a vibrant community. My district is a multi-ethnic, working-class community, where many rely on public transportation. The ability to afford a car is a luxury that many of my constituents simply do not have.

Secretary Buttigieg, as you know, a factor in urban sprawl, struggling public transit systems, and communities carved up by roads and highways is the fact that disproportionate amount of Federal funding goes to highways. Currently, 80 percent goes there, and only 20 percent goes to public transportation.

Will you commit to working with Congress to revisit the broken and antiquated 80/20 funding split that creates urban sprawl and disadvantages Latino, Black, and working-class families?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I welcome the chance to work with Congress to make sure we have the right level of support for transit. You should not have to own a car to prosper in this country, no

matter what kind of community you are living in. And that means investing in our Nation's transportation infrastructure to expand affordable multimodal options, and that, of course, includes transit.

I can tell that you one of the President's key priorities when it comes to building back better, is making sure that Federal spending reaches communities of all sizes. And, by the way, in my view, this is not only about transportation-specific investment, but also a transit-oriented development. Those should go hand in hand, and we should look for ways that different funding sources can rhyme with one another when we think about things that might flow through other Departments, too.

Mr. GARCÍA OF ILLINOIS. Well, that is music to my ears. And, additionally, Mr. Secretary, I have been working with my colleagues in the progressive movement on the Future of Transportation Caucus, which I co-lead, to shift the discussion on reducing transportation greenhouse gas emissions away from just electric vehicles, and to focus on reducing vehicles' miles traveled altogether. I believe that we need to be more deliberate in designating cities with not just transit-oriented development in mind, but also with equitable transit-oriented development, we need to ensure that we are improving our communities and reducing GHG in a way that is feasible for all people, not just replacing one economic burden for another.

Will you, Mr. Secretary, commit to working to ensure that equity is a critical part of the sustainability conversation and help us advance policies that reduce vehicle-miles traveled rather than just trying to replace gas cars with electric vehicles?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, part of the solution is to make sure that our cars are cleaner, but part of the solution is to make sure people have alternatives in order to get around. And we don't assume in our transportation decisions that everybody would be able to, or would want to, be behind the wheel of a car. It is why we need to make sure that all of these different mobility options fit together. And as you rightly say, equity is inseparable from making sure we have that range of options for Americans.

Mr. GARCÍA OF ILLINOIS. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you, again, for taking time to join us today. It lifts my heart to know that someone who cares about transit equity is heading up the Department of Transportation. And I look forward to your visiting my community, the Fourth Congressional District in Chicago, the Little Village Community.

I promise you, we have the best Mexican food, the best Puerto Rican and Central American food found anywhere in the country. So we are eagerly awaiting to host you. Thank you.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you very much. I look forward to it.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields.

Mr. Nehls?

Mr. NEHLS. Yes. Can you hear me?

Ms. DAVIDS. I am not sure if you are on. You are recognized—yeah, we can hear you—for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEHLS. Thank you so much, Chairwoman.

And Mr. Secretary Mayor, again, congratulations on your confirmation, and thank you for being here today. I would like to also

thank you for your service in the Navy Reserve. I heard you are an old intel man in the Navy Reserve.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, sir.

Mr. NEHLS. I served in Afghanistan in 2014. I am old Army guy, an Army Reserve guy who served in Afghanistan in 2008. So I am sure we probably ate in the same dining facility a few times. But, again, thank you for that.

This is a great conversation. I am looking forward to working with this committee. It is truly an honor to serve on this committee. I am a freshman, and I continue to learn each and every day. I am blessed to represent Texas' 22nd Congressional District, which is in southwest Houston.

But, I have a question for you, and it really relates to the Highway Trust Fund, but I just kind of want to have a casual conversation with you for a few minutes. And my understanding of how all of these States, the individual States, contribute into this Highway Trust Fund. My understanding is that, you know, the Federal gas tax is like 18.4 cents. And, so, we send an enormous amount of money from the great State of Texas into this Highway Trust Fund. And then, we get 95 percent of that back.

So if we send in a dollar, we get 95 cents back. So we are considered one of those donor States. I don't know, are you familiar—have you heard of that donor State? And are you aware of what a donor State is and how many of them there are in this great country of ours?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes, I know that the formulas can have that effect, and I have heard that to be a concern, particularly in Texas.

Mr. NEHLS. Yeah, and what it is, it is, I believe, that we are—I believe us and Colorado are the only two States currently that are considered donor States where we receive less funding back. I know that there are some areas, some States receiving 2, 3, even up to 600 percent. They contribute \$1, and they get \$6 back. And that should be a concern of mine in Texas is, you know, we are growing so much. We are probably going to add three congressional seats. I know Congressman Weber said we have more right-of-way than the entire State of Rhode Island, and we have a lot of roads and a lot of failing infrastructure. So that would be a concern. But the real issue is the formula and the way these formulas were written. They were dated back to 2005 from data used in 2000.

So the question, then, would be is, would you agree that this formula should be updated to provide equity to all the States, and that Congress should update the formula and use modern datasets that are not outdated by 20 years?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I agree that the older a formula gets, the more likely you are to see some of these outcomes that don't appear to correspond to the way that travel patterns, or even just where people live, has shifted through time. And I would welcome an opportunity to work on how to make sure that this is something everybody can feel satisfied with, and to come up with approaches that wouldn't have to be revisited every year and have us reinvent the wheel.

Mr. NEHLS. I concur with you, and thank you for that because the data is almost 20 years old. And if there is only one or two

States doing it, we probably have an issue there. So I want to thank you for that.

I know it has been a very long day for you. You are probably getting a little tired. So I am going to take that other minute and just call it quits right now. And God bless you, and I look forward to working with you, sir. And you have an opportunity to do great things with this committee and for the American people. So, if we remain focused, and we can work together, I think you can be in history books for a very, very long time. So God bless you.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, likewise, and thanks very much.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields. Mr. Pappas? Mr. Lamb? Oh, did he? Ms. Newman?

Ms. NEWMAN. I am here.

Ms. DAVIDS. Ms. Newman, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NEWMAN. Well, thank you so much. And good afternoon, Secretary Buttigieg, it is great to have you here. And if I am the co-booze, and it looks like I might be, I am used to that, and the youngest of four. So, you get to get the lightning round with me. You don't even have to share long answers because I think our teams are getting us together. So I will ask more elaborate questions when we visit in person. So here is—

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. It sounds good.

Ms. NEWMAN. Are you ready?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Ready when you are, thank you.

Ms. NEWMAN. So first, do you promise to go big and bold?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Absolutely.

Ms. NEWMAN. Excellent. Do you promise to look at green workforce training as part of construction on infrastructure and new green projects overall?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. It is a great concept. I think we need to make sure—look, this is our chance to break the old idea of climate versus jobs and demonstrate the job creation that is possible through good climate action.

Ms. NEWMAN. Good. And you get extra points for extra words. High-speed rail. Do you commit to looking at smaller projects, not just, you know, the one side of the country to the other side, meaning within a metro area, will you look at funding those projects?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly. We have got a lot of different pieces that would come together here in order to get that national network we hope to have some day. And it is not just about the places maybe most associated with high-speed rail. I think that in the heartland, in the South, in many different parts of the country, there is a lot of opportunity here.

Ms. NEWMAN. OK. Final, final round. So microtransportation deserts, meaning those areas where frontline workers and essential workers have a gap in service because there is a train line that ends, and then it is 2 miles until they get to their bus. There are lots of innovative ride-to-connect acts out there right now that need funding, that would be a matter of funding, or working with private organizations and public funding. Are you open to that?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. You know, this reminds me of an effort that we undertook in South Bend to try to help workers often in lower wage roles be able to get through that last mile. It is important to me that whatever we do in this regard is a supplement, or

a complement, to the transit that is so important as a backbone in our communities. But I think we should look at anything we can do to address those microtransit deserts, whether we are talking about the ability to have some kind of last-mile supplement, or even just road designs that, right now, might entail, you know, folks who have to walk a quarter of a mile or a half a mile between crosswalks to get across roadways.

So, even just being able to safely navigate on foot, let alone having more motorized ways of getting around. All of this needs attention if we really want to meet it when we say we will have equitable development and good transit for all.

Ms. NEWMAN. Well, excellent. You have garnered a collection of 20 points today. So good on you.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I will take it.

Ms. NEWMAN. Thank you for being with us today, and God bless.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thanks very much.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you.

Ms. Mace, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Madam Chair. Someone is doing yard work next door. It is not me. So I hope that you all can't hear it.

I appreciate you being here today, Secretary Buttigieg. I appreciate your service to our country. And I am very encouraged by the words I have heard today from Members on both sides of the aisle, and by your words together about working together. And I hope that we can do that. That is one of the primary reasons that I asked to be on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, because I wanted to find a place, given how the gist of things are right now and in our country, to be able to be nonpartisan and to work together. And I hope that we can do that.

After looking briefly over the administration's Build Back Better plan, I want to take some time to ask you about two industries important to the folks that I represent in South Carolina's First Congressional District, aviation and waterways. As you mentioned earlier in your remarks, the seaports of the United States are one of the top economic drivers for our country. And nowhere else is it more evident than in Charleston, South Carolina, where we have the Charleston Port. And I represent the port, and it is 1 in 10 jobs for the State of South Carolina. Also, it is about \$64 billion to our economy as well.

The impacts of the pandemic, as like all industries across the country, have had tremendous detrimental impact. And as global trade came to a halt last year, we were reminded of how important our ports and these gateways are to trade, to global, and to global supply chains.

So, my first question to you is how does the administration plan to account for the needs of U.S. ports in the plan to build back better?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you for raising the importance of ports, which are unquestionably a vital part of our infrastructure. And I have had the pleasure of running across that beautiful bridge that is in your background and going right up past the Port of Charleston. I know how important that is that the Lowcountry. But also, ports are specific places in the U.S. that have con-

sequences for us, even thousands or hundreds of miles inland because they really benefit the entire economy.

We need to make sure that our ports have the right level of technology in order to keep up with what is happening in industry. We need to make sure we are supporting the workers who are in these ports. And one of the things that I viewed as very important in the Rescue Plan was making sure that we are supporting those workers who have been impacted by COVID.

We need to make sure that as different kinds of automation, or lower emissions technologies come, they are deployed in a way that is effective. But, again, that also we are doing it in a way that is supportive of workers. And we need to recognize this is a national priority, whether you live close to a coast or not.

Again, this is one of those very interagency areas that implicates a lot of parts of the Federal Government, not just the DOT. But we stand ready to do our part to support the maritime sector in ports and communities like yours.

Ms. MACE. Thank you. And will your office and the administration—I know that we were going to sound like a broken record today—commit to working with the Port of Charleston, helping prioritize some of these investments in our infrastructure and our port here in Charleston, especially to be future-proof?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. We would welcome that opportunity. And, again, these are the kinds of things I think we have an opportunity to make a step change in, if we have the right level of ambition on the overall infrastructure package that we hope to move through.

Ms. MACE. Right. And I only have 1½ minutes left. So I am going to go to aviation, go from boats to airplanes real quick. Recently the \$1.9 trillion relief package, the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Protection provision, established a 50/50 cost share program between the industry and the Federal Government. And I know that Boeing is also in my district. We have the Dreamliner 787 being manufactured here. They have a sizable presence. But they would be excluded from participation. And I believe they were going to pass on it regardless because they weren't going to intend to use Federal relief grants. But the program is still of interest to them and to me and the hundreds of workers at the Boeing plant and elsewhere for those benefits. So do you have a timeline of when that program would be stood up in the future?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, this is one that falls within the DOT's responsibilities to prepare. As you know, the aviation industry support that was in the first two rounds of the payroll support program was in Treasury. Although, of course, we have worked closely with them. But the aerospace manufacturing relief program that was funded in the Rescue Plan is set to be managed by the DOT.

So we want to work as expeditiously as possible to implement that, and we are doing everything we can to make sure that we meet all of the legal requirements and stand up the right capacity so that that can flow as quickly as possible, while balancing, of course, the need to be ironclad in our confidence that the taxpayer dollars are being protected and well-spent.

Ms. MACE. Right, and I just want to thank you for your time. You have been literally been with us, I think, almost all day today.

And the beautiful Ravenel Bridge that you see behind me, you have an open invitation to Charleston. I will run that bridge with you or maybe we can bike over one day. We would love to have you down here and visit and tour.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I would love it. Thank you.

Ms. MACE. I yield back.

Mr. STANTON [presiding]. Thank you, Congress Member Mace.

Next up will be Congress Member Lamb.

Mr. LAMB. And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for hanging with us all this time. It is good to see you again. I just want to hit a couple of points. I had told you around the time that you were coming on, about an effort, a bipartisan effort—and a number of people have asked you about bipartisanship today—a bipartisan effort to basically send money to our State departments of transportation. And in my mind, the most important reason for this is that it solves one of the problems that confront us with infrastructure, which is, how do we get people out on the worksite most quickly? You know, we have talked a lot about a lot of long-range, especially climate-focused, issues today, which are really good, but they are going to take a while to build. You know, by definition, we are building something new.

Sending money to the State departments of transportation, for the most part, can have people on the road, or the bridge, the next day or the next month.

In my own district, for example, in western PA, we had about six projects canceled by Penn DOT, our State DOT, simply because they didn't collect enough gas tax revenue last year. And that happened in a lot of States.

And so these are projects that were already planned, engineered, designed, permitted, you know, the whole 9 yards, and they got pulled on the goal line.

And, so, as we put together a bill surrounding this, and line up more bipartisan sponsors, I just wanted you to be aware of it, and hope that you will prioritize both short-term infrastructure projects that can help us solve the unemployment crisis and the underemployment crisis, particularly, for construction workers and members of the trades, get them back out on profitable jobs right away. If you could prioritize that in addition to the things that we have talked about today, I would really appreciate that.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you. I recognize the bipartisan work that you have done on this, and certainly understand that State and local authorities often have a pipeline of projects that are ready to go and just need the support to execute.

So, I hear you on the need to make sure not only that we have got our 30-year, 50-year vision in line, but also that we are ready to go on the things that could be happening tomorrow.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. And I think it is an underappreciated aspect of this pandemic that even people who didn't lose their jobs permanently lost a lot of work hours, and construction workers and people in the trades are a big example of that. Just on the private construction side, a lot of financing has been frozen. There has been a lot of backups with construction materials.

And, so, one role that your Department can play is to try to soak up some of that labor force and keep folks getting paid and working in the next 1 year or 2 years, not just the long term.

The other thing that is related to this, I wanted to emphasize and ask about is, Buy American requirements. If things go according to plan, you will be overseeing hundreds of billions, maybe even trillions of dollars of spending and purchasing in the next few years.

And we have a lot of Buy American laws on the books. Thankfully, on this committee between Chairman DeFazio and Members like Mr. Garamendi, we have an incredible amount of expertise about how to write those laws. But there always are loopholes and cracks, and there has been a lot of stories about foreign investors, particularly Chinese investors taking advantage of those, and having sort of shells and shields around themselves to evade Buy American requirements.

So I know President Biden has placed some expertise within OMB to try to police this, but my question for you is whether you feel that you have adequate resources in your Department to really enforce and investigate and police Buy American requirements in your day-to-day operations?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thanks for asking. As you know, Buy American is very important to the President, to the administration, to our communities, and to me in this Department. And we are committed to making sure that domestic content is maximized across all of our grants and loan program.

We are in the process right now pursuant to the President's Executive order of reviewing everything we can do to maximize the intent of that initiative. And sometimes that means reviewing the waivers and things that are already on the books, identifying those loopholes that you talked about, and seeing what other resources it might take to do proper enforcement.

So, I would welcome the chance to come back to Congress if we feel that we need more resources or some other capability or authority that we don't yet have, but can tell you we are working diligently within the framework set out by the EO, and feel very confident that we will be able to meet those goals.

Mr. LAMB. Glad to hear that and would be happy to have you come back to us and let us know if there are more ways we can help. I think we are at a very sensitive point, particularly when it comes to steel and metals, because it appears that China used the pandemic to continue overproducing, while we were essentially underproducing because of closure orders and slow down in the economy. And there is going to be a lot of dumping in the years ahead, and we will need to meet that with more force and willpower than we ever have before.

So thank you for your commitment on that. Thank you for lasting today.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much.

Next up will be Congress Member Van Duyne.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Thank you very much.

And Secretary Buttigieg, Mayor, thank you for being with us today. Good to see you again.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Likewise.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. As a former mayor myself, I hope your key understanding of the importance in empowering Governors and mayors and congressional Representatives and not Washington bureaucrats to address the needs of our communities will be reflected in your leadership and your approach to transportation policies.

I am looking forward to working with you to develop bipartisan solutions to our country's infrastructure needs. I just had a few questions for you today.

I am getting ready to go down to the border next week, and the crisis there is astounding. And its scale is thousands of illegal immigrants, enabled by drug cartels and human traffickers, enter the country on a daily basis, and many of them unaccompanied minors untested for COVID-19.

Mr. Secretary, recently the CEO of Greyhound Bus had asked Homeland Security to provide assurances that any detainees released by ICE have proof of a negative COVID-19 test, similar to the proof required for international airline passengers who arrive at U.S. ports of entry.

What conversations is DOT having with Homeland Security on the border crisis? And how can law-abiding Americans be sure that the border crisis is not the next super spreader event causing more mass lockdowns and travel restrictions?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, of course, this is an area of concern from a public health, as well as immigration perspective. I will defer to the Department of Homeland Security in terms of the direct handling of the border, as well as, of course, CBP. But I can commit that the Department of Transportation will be working in concert with DHS to do anything and everything that we can in order to support them in meeting their mission, and ensuring that there is safety, as well as expeditious handling of the conditions at the border.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Have you had any conversations to date with DOT on this?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. With DHS, you mean? Specific to the communication from the bus company, I was not familiar with that. But I will take that back and make sure and follow up.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Not just specific to the Greyhound bus request, but about the border crisis in general, are you having conversations with DHS?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. So, I am with DHS leadership and various interagency contacts from time to time. And they know that the DOT is ready to help in any way that we can.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. OK. North Texas, and my district, specifically, are home to DFW Airport, American Airlines. And right next door is Love Field and Southwest. In fact, I think there are more aviation employees located in District 24 than any other district in the country.

We have passed multiple relief bills out of Congress as a Band-Aid to stop the bleeding. But these stopgap measures will do little to stimulate the recovery of the industry. So how will you work with Congress to rebuild those jobs and make the industry stronger?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, first of all, I want to thank Congress for actions like the Rescue Plan, which led to air carriers being able to tell their employees that they could tear up those furlough notices. But we know that there is a long way to go for recovery in that sector, and in the country as a whole.

I think a lot of what we have got to do is making sure that the sector remains at the cutting edge, whether we are talking about the implementation of NextGen technology, whether we are talking about being ahead of the curve in terms of efficiencies and sustainability, or whether it is the work that we do in international forums, where it is very important to stand up for the American air sector, as we are in those conversations with global partners.

I think across the board, we have got to make sure that we are preparing for a future in which America remains the unquestioned global leader in aviation, and that starts with safety. It is one of the reasons why so much is at stake in ensuring that the FAA can meet its fundamental mission of seeing to it that American air travel is the safest in the world. I think all of the other economic gains we hope to pursue, they begin and end with that one.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. OK. Troy Nehls, my counterpart in Texas, and another freshman, had asked you about the donor States. I want to push a little bit farther on that, because I think there was a point in there that he may have missed.

Texas contributes \$212 million more dollars to the trust fund than the State received. North Texas, and this is my point, north Texas is one of the fastest growing regions in the country with many people moving from highly taxed and highly regulated States, which is California and New York. So we consistently hear policy proposals for transportation spending to these States to solve their problem, but while ignoring the growth of regions, such as north Texas. So can you commit to ensure the equitable flow of grant dollars and programs to these high-growth areas?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly, the equitable distribution of grant dollars is very important to me and to this Department. And we need to make sure that we are taking account of the fact that an area like north Texas, or any other in the country, may not look like it did when some of these formulas got locked in. And I do want to work on that together with you.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Excellent. Thank you very much.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much.

Next up is Congress Member Moulton.

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Secretary, good to see you and congratulations. I was heartened by your opening remarks and the alignment with the chairman. Chairman DeFazio mentioned the Virginia Department of Transportation secretary, who explained to us how revolutionary it was for her department to approach a transportation problem with an open slate, a free market of options.

Now, it turned out that the return on investment was much higher, and the overall cost much lower, half as much, for rail solution to her highway congestion problem. And maybe this is why nearly every other developed country in the world is building high-speed rail, but not America.

Now, you and I have discussed my American high-speed rail bill, which fundamentally puts high-speed rail on the table as a proven

alternative, legitimately for the first time in America, and then says, let us use basic business and economic principles to determine whether trains, planes, or automobiles make sense in the quarter in question. It gives Americans more options, States more freedom. And, oh, by the way, high-speed rail is better for the environment, better for downtowns, better for equity, and a much, much nicer way to travel, which is why business travelers in the free market, the world over, consistently choose it over flying or driving when they have the option.

So, Mr. Secretary, States alone have spent \$500 billion on highway projects in urban areas between 1993 and 2017. Has highway congestion increased or decreased over that time?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Certainly, we continue to see mounting problems with highway congestion.

Mr. MOULTON. It has gone up by 144 percent, which, of course, is way faster than population growth.

Now, some people say that high-speed rail won't work in America, but Atlanta to Chicago is the same distance as Beijing to Shanghai, a route now dominated by a 217 mile-per-hour rail service built in just the last 10 years.

Do you think high-speed rail would be helpful to decrease regional disparity between Atlanta and Chicago and places like Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, Chattanooga, and their intermediate communities?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Absolutely. And I want to thank you for pointing out that it is in the American heartland, as well as coastal States, that high-speed rail can make a tremendous difference.

Mr. MOULTON. Yes, and the same can be said for cities like South Bend, between Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis. The Chinese high-speed rail system has decreased regional disparity by about 25.7 percent. Over 25 percent, and we know that that is a huge problem in America.

Now, even President Trump decried the fact that China has the world's fastest trains. And they export that technology all over the world, and people want to buy them. But his administration didn't do anything to fix that.

If the Biden administration reverses that trend so that America once again leads the world, then this will absolutely not be putting China first, as one of my colleagues claimed.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Agreed. And if we want to see the strongest possible U.S. industry manufacturing this kind of equipment, then, of course, we would need to be purchasing it and investing in it to begin with.

Mr. MOULTON. Absolutely. And we need to have that option on the table. So, thank you for your vision, for your leadership. We look forward to working with you. As you said, we have a generational opportunity to invest in infrastructure, and we cannot squander it by investing in the last generation's infrastructure.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much.

Next up is Congress Member Steel.

Mrs. STEEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, that [inaudible] for coming out and testifying. You recently mentioned that you want more taxpayer funds for high-

speed rail projects. The active administration at the Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration has echoed the same requests.

In 2009, President Obama spent \$10 billion for high-speed rail projects, including \$3.5 billion for California's high-speed rail. And more than 10 years later, we are here with nothing to show for this huge waste of taxpayers' money. I don't think taxpayers should have to take another failed ride.

Unsurprisingly, we saw major setbacks across the United States as the States tried to build new high-speed rail. This doesn't mean that I am against it, because I was raised in Japan, and I say it really works. But we saw the cost skyrocket, and three of the most significant rail projects in Ohio, Florida, and Wisconsin were canceled. For the California high-speed rail project alone, cost estimates have skyrocketed from the \$33 billion originally proposed to upward of \$100 billion. And delays have gotten longer and longer with [inaudible] end in sight.

[Audio malfunction.]

Mr. STANTON. Congress Member Steel, I think we lost your audio.

Mrs. STEEL. This truly is a train to nowhere. [Inaudible.] Can you hear me now?

Mr. STANTON. Yes. We can hear you now. Please ask the question again.

Mrs. STEEL. So in 2019, the Department of Transportation terminated its 2010 agreement with the State for high-speed rail, and stopped \$929 million in taxpayer dollars from going to the project. The Department of Transportation said it made the decision because of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's repeated failure to submit critical required deliverables, and its failure to make sufficient progress to complete this project.

So I am very much concerned that your Department has now moved to settle a lawsuit over these actions, when California continues to stay the same ongoing failure to manage the project to get spending in line. Just last month, it was reported that there is another delay, an \$800 million cost increase.

So, Secretary Buttigieg, after more than a decade of failure and billions of taxpayer dollars thrown down this high-speed money pit, how could you assure America's hardworking taxpayers, they have been struggling so much, especially during the pandemic, continue to funding, wouldn't they waste it?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you for the question. I think it is an opportunity to express my conviction that the American people deserve excellent high-speed rail.

Now, we clearly have not had the kind of resources or the commitment that other countries have. And somebody has had to go first, and in many regards, California has stepped forward to take the lead to advance high-speed rail. And, of course, the first projects are those we can expect to be the hardest while we build up both a network and an industry here in the U.S.

I am glad that you mentioned the steps that were taken in 2009. The first time there was really a robust offering of high-speed rail funding in the Recovery Act, only to note when that happened with \$10 billion in funds made available, 39 States requested nearly \$75

billion in funding, demonstrating, in my view, the strong appetite and desire for this among the American people.

We have obviously been challenged as a country when it comes to high-speed rail. But I do not believe that the American economy, or the American people, or American technology are inferior. And since we are not an inferior country, we should not settle for inferior capabilities when it comes to high-speed rail for every American. If other countries can do it, in my view, so can we.

Mrs. STEEL. Well, I totally agree with you regarding that, yes, we need it. But for especially California, that originally, the bill was \$33 billion for the cost. Now it is over \$100 billion, and it didn't even start yet. So where this cost is coming up, who is going to pay for this? Especially the failed high-speed rail, it is not even going to be even the high-speed rail. And they cut down a few miles. So it is going from nowhere to nowhere. So how can we waste more money on this failed high-speed rail in California, and where is that money going to come from?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, again, I cannot accept the proposition that America is not capable of succeeding on this or any other project. Clearly, we have to make sure there are rigorous controls to support the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. And we have got to make sure that going forward, we have got the kinds of support and the kind of alignment that is needed for project delivery that we know is going to be complex, given the relationship between local, State, and Federal authorities.

But I also believe that we are up to this. I believe that America cannot but have a high degree of ambition and aspiration when it comes to rail, whether we are talking about California or any other part of this country.

Mrs. STEEL. So you [inaudible] California's high-speed rail?

Mr. STANTON. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Steel. Your time is up.

We are now going to move on to Congress Member Auchincloss.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome Mr. Secretary. I appreciate you being with us for this long hearing. When you get to the freshmen, though, you know you are getting close to the end, so, you will get a break soon enough.

When we last spoke, Mr. Secretary, we had talked about the Future of Transportation Caucus principles of equity, access, and sustainability, the pillars for me in how we evaluate transportation infrastructure. And as a former mayor, you were really a trailblazer on Complete Streets. And I want to ask you about how you see DOT investing in Complete Streets to expand access to jobs and services, to improve sustainability, and to create more equitable cities and towns for our constituents?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. The idea of Complete Streets, as you know, is to make sure that our streets and roads in our communities are set up to accommodate all kinds of travel. Yes, cars, but not only cars, that they are safe for pedestrians, accessible for bicycles and wheelchairs, and that they are part of an integrated plan for that neighborhood or that community.

We took those steps in South Bend by converting a part of our downtown that had really been empty, or far too quiet for far too long, and found that we were able to reinvigorate it by making that

transformation of what had been one-way highways going right through the heart of our community into a more Complete Streets approach.

So I want to make sure that those kinds of gains are available to communities across the country. And it means making sure we align our Federal dollars to support communities that want to take this kind of approach. I think too often we have been beholden to measures that assume that the only thing that a road is good for is blasting through vehicle traffic as quickly as possible.

Now, efficiency for vehicle traffic is always going to be, of course, an important part of what roads are there to do, but roads have to be in streets especially in the hearts of our cities, have to be places where vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and businesses can co-exist peacefully and safely. And that is the underlying philosophy that will be integrated in the way we approach our funding.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Secretary, towards this end of investing in Complete Streets that thicken the labor market by expanding the number of jobs and services within a commuter shed, I would like to make requests two requests of you and to hear your thoughts on them. The first to issue a definition of what shared mobility operators are in your notice of funding opportunities DOT. I think this would create clarity for micromobility vendors, as well as for carshare and on-demand transit services. And number two, to direct the FHWA and the FTA to issue clarifying guidance on the ability of recipients of highway and transit funding to use those Federal funds for shared mobility operators.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you. I will take both of those ideas back. As you know, there has been such swift and complex development in terms of all these different micromobility and shared mobility companies and platforms. And we need to make sure that we are keeping up with that on a policy level and creating as much predictability as we can. So I welcome those ideas, and we will explore those going forward.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. I appreciate it, Mr. Secretary.

And Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. CARBAJAL [presiding]. Thank you very much. Mr. Stanton, I have been told that I have the gavel back, not to confuse you. Sorry about that.

Mr. STANTON. You are in the lead, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. With that, up next we go to Representative Kahele.

Mr. KAHELE. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. And aloha, Mr. Secretary, from Hawaii. It is great to see you today. And I also appreciate your time and effort today to appear before this committee. I know it has been going on 5 hours. When I started this hearing, it was dark outside here in Hawaii. Seniority does have its privileges, but I do appreciate your time.

Mr. Secretary, I have a two-part question centered around the administration's Build Back Better national strategic plans, specifically as that relates to our airline and maritime industry, so that we can continue to ensure that we protect and invest in the middle class and create good-paying jobs.

So, my first question is, President Biden has expressed his strong support for the Jones Act, and as Chinese companies with state

support become increasingly dominant in the shipping, shipbuilding industry, and maritime supply chain, as Secretary, will you continue to support the Jones Act and support a major investment in the U.S. shipbuilding industry to support good-paying union jobs, ensure the national security of the Nation, and protect the stability of the U.S. shipbuilding industry?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you for the opportunity to speak about the importance of supporting U.S. shipbuilding industry and our maritime industry writ large. I strongly support the Jones Act. As you mentioned, that is the President's view as well, because it makes sure that cargoes move between U.S. ports travel on vessels that are built, owned, and crewed by Americans.

The Jones Act also ensures that we don't lose our domestic shipbuilding capability, so that we are not in the situation, as you pointed out, where Chinese-flag vessels could wind up being the only place we could turn to carry our domestic commerce on the Mississippi River or between Florida and New York. That obviously would have national security implications that are not acceptable. If we lose our national maritime industry, it might not return and the consequences would be devastating.

So, I am going to continue to ensure that the U.S. Maritime Administration and DOT are doing our part, of course, recognizing that there are many U.S. agencies that are involved in the Jones Act and we will be doing everything we can to support that industry, as well as our merchant marine.

Mr. KAHELE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, that's great to hear. One last question. So the chair, in his opening remarks, which I am grateful for, ended with the U.S. airline industry, specifically our Open Skies agreements with one of the most egregious bad actors, Norwegian Air, who, since 2016, when permitted to operate in the United States, has, just as predicted, undercut tax labor and safety regulations by operating and choosing to operate out of Ireland.

Mr. Secretary, you will have oversight of our Open Skies agreements. And while these bilateral agreements have largely been successful, resulting in increased travel, I have grave concerns about their enforcement. And I am particularly concerned regarding potential labor arbitrage from the flags-of-convenience airlines. So as you begin to work through the many issues we face, especially as it results to the airline industry, Mr. Secretary, will you work together with me to ensure that we enforce those agreements, and that any agreements include labor clauses that we adhere to that are made in those agreements for foreign air carriers?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. I would welcome the chance to work with you on this. We need to make sure that these agreements do not put the U.S. sector at any kind of disadvantage. I can tell you within the existing framework, that we will adjudicate any application based on fidelity to those agreements, but, also, recognize with you that there may be scope to work with Congress on further steps.

Mr. KAHELE. Awesome. Mahalo, Mr. Secretary and mahalo, Mr. Chair.

And I yield back my time.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Kahele.

Next, we move to Representative Strickland, another mayor.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nice to see you, Secretary Buttigieg.

As a former mayor and a former board member of a transit agency, I know how critical it is that transit systems can survive the pandemic, but also expand service, and this is a conversation about equity as well. So I am going to ask you two questions: one about TOD, and then another one about one of my favorite topics, high-speed rail. So as we look to infrastructure on transit expansion, with a focus on housing feasibility. Because for so long, we have not linked housing with expansion of transportation. We know it is good for an economic recovery, and also employing thousands of union workers.

So, for example, in my hometown of Tacoma, when we expand light rail, it will affect 57 percent of the population that is minority and 22 percent low income. But because of the pandemic and economic factors, there is a potential for project delay. Last Congress, this committee included, the House passed a provision to increase funding of total project costs to eligible Capital Investment Grant or CIG projects.

So, can you tell us, Mr. Secretary, how the Department of Transportation will work to support similar programs and streamline the CIG program to prevent unnecessary delays, while also working with your HUD counterpart, another mayor, Secretary Fudge on TOD?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you for representing the mayors' club here, and for a really important question. I think mayors are compelled to consider all of the integration between different policy areas, and the structure of the Federal Government doesn't always reflect that. As mayor, you don't get to think about transit one week and housing the next. They are all on your plate all at the same time and all side by side. And I think increasingly we can break across those silos federally to do so. As a matter of fact, I reached out to Secretary Fudge right away when she was confirmed. And we have already had great conversations about this.

There is no road without a context. It goes from somewhere to somewhere. And the same is true for every transit route. And we need to make sure that we are synchronizing what we are doing around housing and community development with what we seek to do around transit and transportation.

As you mentioned, one of the powerful tools we have for that is that Capital Investment Grant Program, and there have been steps from the prior administration that changed how some of the relevant calculations were conducted in a way that they created more obstacles. And we are taking a look at that and what we can do to make sure that this resource really is there in all the ways it should be for our communities.

So you have my commitment that we will not only make sure this tool is effective as possible, but that we will continue to integrate not only at my level with my counterparts in the Cabinet, but inviting my staff to do the same thing, because we, as every mayor does, we have to be integrating these considerations to have truly functional neighborhoods and transit systems in the future.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Great. Well, thank you for that, Mr. Secretary. And then a very quick question about high-speed rail. You know,

we are talking about high-speed rail projects in different parts of the country. We are talking about Texas, we have talked about the Northeast, we have even talked about California.

And I want to make sure that you are aware that in the Pacific Northwest there is the Cascadia Innovation Corridor, and we are considering what we are calling ultra high-speed rail. With that, we know that sometimes there are cities that are smaller that are left out of the transit hubs when we talk about high-speed rail.

So are you able to talk about any sort of a commitment that you are willing make that when we talk about high-speed rail investments, that we are doing it equitably, geographic equity, and also, of course, the equity that we talk about having an inclusive workforce?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Thank you. Yes, on the first front, we need to make sure that no community is left out of these incredible capabilities. And that has got to be a very important part of system design and policy design, so that not just those communities that have the direct stops, but those around them are positioned to benefit. That is part of what it means to have an integrated network so people can get to where they need to be.

On the latter point, I think that is no less important, making sure economically that the people who have been excluded, and let's face it, sometimes directly made worse off by past infrastructure investments, are being included and are benefiting, whether it is as workers on these projects, as owners of businesses doing business with Federal Government, or federally funded State and local projects, and, of course, as community residents benefiting from these investments.

We haven't always got it right as a country, but this is our chance to do it right this time.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, for your vision. And I am thrilled to have a mayor at the helm of transportation.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much. Next, we will move on to Representative Williams.

Ms. WILLIAMS OF GEORGIA. Hello. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Buttigieg, for holding on until you get to the last person of the day, I think.

I want to go back—you were mentioning some disparities that were done in the past and transportation infrastructure, and so, I want to touch on that and discuss urban renewal projects. As you know, the creation of the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1956 led to the segregation and displacement of people of color when highways were built right in the middle of Black and Brown communities. These highway projects led to the demolition of homes, schools, churches, and more. And Atlanta is a prime example of this occurring with the building of Interstate 75, 85, and I-20 through central Atlanta, which was predominantly Black in the 1950s and 1960s.

So, my question is how do you suggest—building upon the conversation you were just having with Representative Strickland—how do you suggest that the Federal Government address and cor-

rect the inequities caused by the act, and the highway projects that followed?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thanks for such an important question. It really bears on why equity needs to be one of the pillars of our approach to infrastructure going forward. As you pointed out, Atlanta is one of many places that demonstrate how these kinds of investments of highways went through, divided, sometimes devoured or destroyed Black neighborhoods and neighborhoods of other minoritized groups, sometimes by neglect, but frankly, we must admit, sometimes on purpose as well. And we must take account of that active harm that was caused by Federal taxpayer dollars in deciding where future taxpayer dollars are going to go.

This could be done in any number of ways. As you have seen, we have already made sure that things like racial equity are included in discretionary grants like the INFRA grant notice that just went out.

But really, we have an opportunity to do it in the biggest way by making it a direct consideration in funding for infrastructure for the future.

Of course, part of the answer also lies in a positive example from Atlanta, which is the way that under Mayor Maynard Jackson, the construction of the airport there became one of engines for the development of a Black middle class in Atlanta through ensuring that minority workers and contractors were able to see the economic benefit from those public dollars being spent. That is one of the reasons why I feel a lot of urgency to make sure that we are strengthening the capabilities of our DBE programs here at the Department and across the administration so that whatever flows of funding Congress may choose to send our way are going out equitably too.

Ms. WILLIAMS OF GEORGIA. Thank you. And I would love to talk more later on how Congress and the administration can work together to revitalize these urban centers.

But I also want to talk about infrastructure reuse projects across the country that are leading the way to bring underserved communities together and increasing access to clean and healthier environments for residents, and providing access to public spaces. In my district, the Atlanta BeltLine is repurposing abandoned railroad lines to create a 22-mile, multi-use trail network, where people can live, work, and play, and learn without having to get into a physical car.

How can we ensure that infrastructure reuse projects are included in our Federal grants process?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, it is a great question. And I think what we need to do is recognize that good infrastructure policy isn't just about adding things where we need them. It is also about reimagining what we have already got. When we have a piece of infrastructure that has been degraded or neglected, like the rails that you are talking about, that can go through a rail-to-trail conversion, and change from a liability to an asset, we should be doing everything we can to support that, because there is a real return on that investment.

Often, these initiatives are locally led. It is tough for us sitting in this building in Washington to be able to decide or dictate where

those greatest benefits are. But we should be empowering local communities with resources that do come from the Federal Government. And we would love to work with you on ways to make sure that that happens.

Ms. WILLIAMS OF GEORGIA. Thank you so much. And I will yield back the balance of my time as Carter has just come in and interrupted my train of thought.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you very much. Is Representative Pappas online?

Mr. PAPPAS. I am here, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CARBAJAL. There you are. We will go to you next, Representative Pappas.

Mr. PAPPAS. Terrific. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. It is great to be with you. And I think as you can see from this hearing today, conversation around infrastructure is a marathon and not a sprint, and we appreciate your endurance here. It is going to take some more to get things over the finish line. But we appreciate your commitment, and really appreciate the exchange of ideas here.

Now, I know a lot of folks have been highlighting local issues. One I want to bring up to your attention is a critical project in my district, you may be familiar with it, based on your time here in New Hampshire: It is the Capitol Corridor rail project, which would extend commuter rail from Massachusetts to Nashua and Manchester, New Hampshire. When you talk to our business community about where they are building new headquarters or looking to expand, when you talk to workers who are looking to put down roots and start their careers, one of the top things they are all looking for is access to public transportation, and, particularly, rail access.

So I think that it is critically important that we look to support projects like this. Our State DOT is right now working on preliminary design and financial planning for the project. They would seek to access New Starts funding, which can be a challenging process, certainly for States to navigate.

One of the concerns that I have around this particular program is just the unknowns around commuting patterns after COVID-19, whether or not that could add a wrinkle to projects being able to move forward under New Starts. I certainly don't want to see any temporary changes in patterns that are caused by COVID-19 to slow down or stop a project that is going to be so crucial to the long-term economic vitality of a region like the one that I am from. So I am just wondering if the administration has considered whether any changes to New Starts would be appropriate or needed to ensure that worthwhile projects like this one in particular isn't going to be halted because of any uncertainties that have arisen around COVID.

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Yes. We certainly want to make sure that there isn't disruption to worthy projects and especially those that are so far along in the design and vision process. So we are going to make sure through the relevant agencies, the FTA in this case, that there is a close pattern of working with applicants to see how those impacts might have arisen due to COVID, and do everything we can to keep good projects on track.

Mr. PAPPAS. Well, terrific.

And one other thing I wanted to highlight, and I hear it a lot from my cities, and towns, and communities that are either looking to create local or regional networks of bike and pedestrian infrastructure, just the lack of a dedicated funding program that can support, not just doing a sidewalk or doing a rail trail, but to really build out, some really significant networks that could help drive the local economy, increase tourism, promote recreation, and get some cars off the roads.

So I think you are probably aware that half of the American trips that people make in their daily life are within a 20-minute bicycle ride and nearly one-quarter of all trips that people make are within a 20-minute walk. So by dedicating some additional funding to active transportation, I think we can really help create communities with amenities that are walkable and bikeable, that have connectivity to one another. And I am hoping that you would take a look at our Connecting America's Active Transportation Systems Act—it's a \$500 million dedicated program that Congressman Huffman and I are hoping to reintroduce in this Congress, and hoping to incorporate in an infrastructure package.

I am just wondering in the remaining time we have if you have any thoughts around active transportation and its role in an overall infrastructure package?

Secretary BUTTIGIEG. Well, thank you for your vision initiative on this, because this is absolutely part of what it means to improve transportation in the 21st century. You know, this would—the importance of active transportation was, I think, poorly understood in the 1950s, the last time we really had an opportunity to think this big around infrastructure. But this time around, we know a lot of things that were less well understood then. That vehicle transportation has a role, but that there are congestion mitigation benefits, health benefits, environmental benefits, and community benefits to active transportation; that under the right conditions, it can be done in all kinds of climate, as people in New Hampshire have demonstrated, and as countries around the world in very northern climates have been able to demonstrate with actions that have moved them, frankly, further ahead than where the U.S. is right now. So this absolutely has to be part of a meaningful vision for the future of surface transportation. And I would welcome ways to incorporate that in forthcoming legislation.

Mr. PAPPAS. Well, thank you for your thoughts. You truly have earned your gold star today. And, so, all the best to you for a successful term.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank, you Mr. Pappas.

And this pretty much concludes our hearing today. I want to thank Secretary Buttigieg for being with us today. It was a long day, but your comments have been very informative and helpful. And we look forward to working with you to transform our infrastructure system.

Especially and personally, I am looking forward to your visiting my district, California's 24th Congressional District, and the central coast in California.

I ask unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as our witness has provided answers to any questions that may be submitted to him in writing.

I also ask unanimous consent that the record remain open for 15 days for any additional comments and information submitted by Members or the witness to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:11 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Statement of Jonathan Nez, President, Navajo Nation, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Peter A. DeFazio

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide the testimony of the Navajo Nation. If you have not yet had the opportunity to see our beautiful Navajoland, which we call Dinétah, I invite you and your families to visit us. The Navajo Nation is the largest American Indian tribe in the United States, with 350,000 tribal members and a land mass over 27,000 square miles that spans Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.¹ If Navajo was a state, we would rank 41st in size, close behind Indiana.

Our red rock spires and rainbow deserts are the iconic landscape of the American West that you may know from film and television, but much of our transportation infrastructure is the landscape of an America the federal government has seemingly forgotten. The efforts of the Navajo people, or Diné, to get to school, jobs, health care—or really any place their lives take them on the Navajo Nation—is compromised daily by inequitable funding formulas and federal policies that you can fix. We look forward to working with you on an infrastructure bill that provides for a more equitable future on the Navajo Nation, and other large land based tribes.

INTRODUCTION

There are few issues as important to the Navajo Nation as transportation infrastructure because roads are the key to everything—access to health, education, and economic opportunities. Despite the determined and valiant efforts of the Navajo Division of Transportation (NDOT), and the many successes we have achieved since NDOT first partnered directly with the Federal Highway Administration in 2017, the Navajo Nation continues to be undermined by a physical infrastructure that is among the worst in the United States.

The Navajo Nation has 14,167 miles of roads²—enough miles to stretch from our capital in Window Rock, Arizona to Canberra, the capital of Australia. 10,000 miles of our roads are unimproved dirt and sand roads that become washboards and sand traps in the dry season and impassable mud bogs whenever it rains or snows. We are attaching for your consideration our new transportation white paper that provides a robust narrative about the impacts these problematic roads have upon users, and an in-depth analysis of policy solutions that could provide transformational change.

In this testimony, we respectfully provide our response to five comments that U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg made to this Committee on March 25, 2021³ in hopes that our lived experience will help inform your approach to the next infrastructure bill. Like Congressman Stanton, we too implore this Committee to not forget the extraordinary needs of our tribal communities.

“Every Citizen Shares the Need for Reliable Roads”—Secretary Pete Buttigieg

We wholeheartedly agree with Secretary Buttigieg that every citizen needs reliable roads but some road users deserve more consideration by this Committee. Navajo students who are transported in federal school busses that must travel over federal roads to federal schools are being denied access to education because of federal policies. We thank Chairman DeFazio for requesting the report that the Govern-

¹ <https://www.discovernavajo.com/things-to-know/fact-sheet/>

² https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/fb035e5f-efde-480b-abcf-2bd23e81b0a9/downloads/NNTTIP%20Presentation_08-27-18.pdf?ver=1617644619292

³ <https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Secretary%20Buttigieg%20Testimony.pdf>

ment Accountability Office published in May 2017⁴ that characterized the impact Indian school bus routes have upon Indian students, finding that on the Navajo Nation students miss more than a dozen days of school per year because their roads are impassable.

In *Meyers v. Bd. of Education*,⁵ the seminal 1994 civil rights case that was born in the community of Navajo Mountain and is the *Brown v. Board of Education of Indian Country*, the court held that our children have the same right to get an education as other students in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico under the 14th amendment. Federal agency rules, policies and practices continue to deny Navajo students the equal treatment promise of *Brown* to American Indian students. So while it is true that every citizen needs reliable roads, our students have a constitutional right to get to where they are going when they are trying to get to school.

Unfortunately, this is a right that is violated daily when our students spend as much time on a school bus as they do in class when they get stranded on washed out or otherwise inaccessible roads caused by federal disinvestment. Today we receive the same amount of funding for our roads as we received in 1995 because, while the national tribal transportation fund has steadily increased, our share of it has decreased by two thirds. This is no accident but is instead the direct result of a cynical tribal road funding formula muscled through Congress by entities that have no tribal roads.

The funding formula that SAFETEA-LU first authorized in 2002, which subsequent federal highway bills have reaffirmed, is an inequitable process that populates the national tribal road inventory with non-existent roads miles (i.e. canoe routes and dogsled trails) and proposed roads (i.e. ghost roads). It also subsidizes state and county roads that are not even located on tribal trust land. The effect has been devastating to the Navajo Nation. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, we received \$79.91 million in Indian Reservation Road funds. Two years later, we lost 52.45% of our tribal transportation funding. Our annual transportation funding has plateaued for the past decade near \$53 million.

In recent years, Secretaries of the Bureau of Indian Affairs have lauded in their testimonies to Congress that, thanks to SAFETEA-LU and its legislative successors, tribes are now investing their tribal transportation funds into county and state transportation projects (please see BIA Assistant Secretary Michael Black's testimony at the 2014 Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing).⁶ In 2014 the total Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funds for 566 tribes was just \$450 million but BIA approved \$270 million in TTP to be invested in non-BIA and non-tribal transportation projects. We do not view this as regional progress but as stealing from our students.

"We face an imperative to create resilient infrastructure and confront inequities that have devastated communities."—Secretary Pete Buttigieg

Though many communities throughout your congressional districts struggle from systemic inequities, only a few Members of this Committee represent tribes within their districts and know first-hand that lack of infrastructure resources on large land based Indian reservations is qualitatively different from the lack of infrastructure anywhere else in this country.

In 2018, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission provided to Congress the Briefing Report called "Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans"⁷ that explained:

Both the United States and Native Americans have committed to and sustained a special trust relationship, which obligates the federal government to promote the general wellbeing of American Indian tribes in exchange for the surrender and reduction of tribal lands.

The United States signed 375 treaties, passed laws, and instituted policies that have shaped and defined the special government-to-government relationship between federal and tribal governments. Although Americans Indians have given up their land, the U.S. government has yet to provide adequate support for their infrastructure, self-governance, housing, education, health, and economic development needs.

⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-17-423.pdf>

⁵ <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/905/1544/1741037/>

⁶ https://www.doi.gov/oc/hearings/113/tribaltransportation_031314

⁷ <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/12-20-Broken-Promises.pdf>

Underinvestment in physical infrastructure manifests in broken roads and bridges that impairs the ability of tribal governments to provide essential services and tribal communities to thrive.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the brutal consequence of federal neglect of our communities, ravaging Navajo families in large part because of federal policies that plagued the Navajo Nation infrastructure long before the coronavirus made infrastructure a matter of life and death. 40% of Navajo families live without running water or sanitation,⁸ 32% of Navajo homes lack electricity,⁹ and 96% of Navajo families do not have broadband.¹⁰ Our patients must travel up to 150 miles one way on some of the worst roads in the United States just to access basic health care. Last year the coronavirus infection rate on the Navajo Nation was over 2,304.41 per 100,000 people, which is especially startling when you consider that the coronavirus infection rate of New York State was 1,806 cases per 100,000 people.¹¹ Today we still suffer a COVID-19 death rate that is 3.5 times higher than the U.S. average.

But federal funding neglect is not our only problem. Overbearing implementation of Secretarial oversight is also responsible for our transportation system still being 85% comprised of earthen roads that are in 2021 no different than they were in 1921. The federal trust responsibility to which the Broken Promises Report rightfully refers is intended to protect tribal resources, lifeways and the culture of trustees on federal Indian trust lands. But the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act recognizes the inherent right of tribes to govern themselves. The way in which Secretarial oversight is currently asserted for Rights of Way and pre-construction clearances on the Navajo Nation is a structural inequity that deprives us of the same decisionmaking authority that the federal government extends to states and territories. As a result, our transportation system is caught within duplicative tangles of red tape that drive up project costs and protract project schedules by degrees of years, not weeks or months.

We have the capacity to administer transportation programs, fulfill our self-governance agreement with the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, and operate like any state department of transportation. The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) is our regulatory agency charged with protection of human health and the environment. Since the 1990s, NNEPA departments and programs have worked diligently to seek Treatment As a State status from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the following:

- Public Water Systems Supervision Program for Safe Drinking Water Act, August 1991
- Section 106 Clean Water Act, June 1993
- Safe Drinking Water Act by Underground Injection Control, September 1994
- Section 319 Clean Water Act, October 1999
- Public Water System Supervision Program, December 2000
- Title V Permitting for Clean Air Act, October 2004
- Sub Section 303/401 for Clean Water Act, January 2006
- Class II Primacy, Safe Drinking Water Act by Underground Injection Control, October, 2008
- Approval for development of Uranium Policy Commission, 2015

Today NNEPA continues to work even harder to get Treatment As a State for more programs, administer those programs for which NNEPA has been delegated federal credentials, and develop our own Navajo Nation environmental laws to further protect our own natural resources. Secretarial oversight may be appropriate for a 50 member village, or a direct service tribe that lacks the capacity to govern itself. However, secretarial authority should be calibrated to honor not hinder tribal sovereignty, to support not undermine the Navajo Nation and dozens of other tribes who have similarly spent the last 50 years developing systems of self-governance to work toward self-sufficiency.

⁸ http://uswateralliance.org/sites/uswateralliance.org/files/Closing%20the%20Water%20Access%20Gap%20in%20the%20United%20States_DIGITAL.pdf

⁹ <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/energy-poverty-in-the-us/>

¹⁰ https://aiipi.clas.asu.edu/sites/default/files/05011019fcreport_on_broadband_deployment_in_indian_country_pursuant_to_the_repack_airwaves_yielding_better_access_for_users_of_modern_services_act_of_2018.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/18/us/navajo-nation-infection-rate-trnd/index.html>

“Now is the time to finally address major inequities . . . decades of disinvestment.”—Secretary Pete Buttigieg

Seventeen years before “Broken Promises,” the U.S. Civil Rights Commission sent to Congress its first report on federal neglect in Indian Country. That report is called “A Quiet Crisis”¹² and it similarly outlined for Members the inequitable consequence of decades of disinvestment in Indian Country, saying:

“(T)here persists a large deficit in funding Native American programs that needs to be paid to eliminate the backlog of unmet Native American needs, an essential predicate to raising their standards of living to that of other Americans. Native Americans living on tribal lands do not have access to the same services and programs available to other Americans, even though the government has a binding trust obligation to provide them.”

Chief among the recommendations that “A Quiet Crisis” made was increased funding for such essential infrastructure as roads, which are predicates to providing other needs like housing, health care and education. The urgency of the need for federal investment in tribal roads was especially emphasized for large land based tribes, yet since “A Quiet Crisis” was sent to Congress, funding levels for the Navajo transportation system have become so low that it is only possible to construct 16 miles of new pavement per year. In the past two decades, federal disinvestment in roads and bridges on the Navajo Nation has mostly worsened:

- Deferred Road Pavement Needs: The Navajo Nation Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has identified a total of \$1.4 billion in funding needs to address the current pavement deficiencies of the Navajo Nation.
- Other Deferred Road Needs: Our LRTP also identifies an additional \$6.5 billion for upgrades to the current roadway system, which includes earth, gravel, and paved roads.
- Deferred Bridge Needs: There are 179 bridges that currently present transportation challenges to the Navajo Nation. We need \$30 million to repair or reconstruct 10 of our most structurally deficient bridges some of which comprise components of major school bus routes.

Unfortunately, MAP-21 eliminated the stand alone national tribal bridge program that once provided \$14 million per year. Today 574 tribes must now compete for annual bridge grants that are little more than skinny slices from the crumb pie that is the 4% tribal bridge set aside from annual Tribal Transportation Program funds.

“Now is the time to improve the air we breathe”—Secretary Pete Buttigieg

Dirt roads may not typically come to mind during discussions about clean air but unpaved road dust is a big source of particulate matter on the Navajo Nation. Our 9,400 miles of earthen roads have public health consequences. A 2005 Navajo Nation Emissions Inventory found that road dust is a key source of Particulate Matter 10 and Particulate Matter 2.5,¹³ both of which have resulted in the Navajo Nation sharing the highest rates for asthma hospitalizations among all Indian Health Service Regions. There is a cure for this that should be easy but the Bureau of Indian Affairs makes very difficult: gravel.

The problem is two-fold:

1. Definition of “Maintenance”: The BIA defines “maintenance” so narrowly that the agency considers graveling a dirt road to be “construction” making blading the only option, even though blading dirt roads provides merely temporary benefit but permanently channels the road below its surrounding surface, thus creating gully washes and sometimes even exposing archaeological properties.
2. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The BIA insists that adding gravel to an existing previously non gravelled road, or installing culverts within an already disturbed area, triggers the full panoply of the NEPA process, thus making the application of gravel to dirt roads prohibitive on the Navajo Nation if using BIA Tribal Priority Allocation (TPA) funds for these purposes.

¹²<https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/na0703/na0204.pdf>

¹³<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6207133/>

“Now is the time to redouble our commitment to transportation reliability and safety and ensure that families will no longer have to mourn tragic deaths that could have been prevented.”—Secretary Pete Buttigieg

The Navajo Nation is making every effort to provide safe travels on our roadways to reduce fatal motor vehicle injuries that are a significant public health problem for the Diné people, accounting for 10.6% of all deaths. Our fatality vehicular accident rate is at least four times that of the rest of the country: 44.80/100,000 on the Navajo Nation compared to 11.9/100,000 in the rest of the United States.¹⁴ As bad as our documented vehicular injury and fatality rates are, in reality they are likely far worse due to underreporting. The Navajo Nation’s tri-state jurisdiction makes tracking and reporting crash data a very difficult challenge, undermining our ability to adequately access the federal funding we need to mitigate crashes.

Nevertheless, we are grateful that in January 2021 we were awarded \$592,740 in FY 2020 Tribal Transportation Program Safety Funds to assess and improve three roads that have experienced some of the highest number of fatal and serious injury crashes within the Navajo Nation. Our 2018 Strategic Highway Safety Plan found that overturn/rollover vehicles and head-on collisions were largely caused by lane departures that could be avoided with structural improvements. Our intention for this project is to achieve crash reductions of at least 25% by use of chevron warning signs, 35% by use of fluorescent curve signs, and 37.7% by use of edge line pavement markings.

There is an enormous need at hundreds of other locations on the Navajo Nation for similar roadway safety improvements, but there is profound competition for limited Tribal Transportation Program funds that are woefully funded compared to true need. For example, in 2014 the Federal Highway Administration could only provide \$8.5 million in grants for 94 tribal safety projects when 126 tribes applied for a requesting total of \$27.1 million in assistance. We agree with Secretary Buttigieg that now is the time to redouble our commitment to transportation safety, and we hope Congress will redouble its investment in the Tribal Transportation Program to help us reduce the transportation safety disparities that kill American Indians at far higher rates than other Americans.

“Now is the time to create millions of good jobs—for American workers, to help communities and businesses—big and small, rural and urban—to compete and win in the global economy.”—Secretary Pete Buttigieg

We need jobs here on the Navajo Nation, now more than ever. The shuttering of the fossil fuel industry on and around our tribal lands has already cost 2,200 Diné workers well-paying jobs. Over the next few years we anticipate the closure of five more coal fire plants. Our own children often have no choice but to move away in search of opportunities that are not available here at home on Dinétah.

To reduce persistent poverty and dependency within our borders, we need the federal government to help our efforts to cut red tape in order to improve our transportation system. Federal policies that have long stymied development on the Navajo Nation—separate clearance approvals by multiple federal agencies but for the same intent, for example—continue to repel private investors from doing business here because their first consideration is the availability of adequate infrastructure needed to support their enterprise.

The Navajo Nation is rising to the occasion of this difficult moment by looking at all opportunities to diversify our economy, including new rail. A railroad spur from the I-40 BNSF railway corridor to San Juan County is essential to stimulate economic development and job creation in our region and install vitally needed infrastructure here on the Navajo Nation. We are grateful that in January 2021 USDOT awarded our multi-jurisdictional coalition a \$2 million “Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development” (BUILD) grant for planning a capital railroad project that is estimated to cost about \$200 million, as well as a transloading facility on the Navajo Nation that is estimated to cost \$350 million.

Tourism is also a big component of the Navajo Nation Comprehensive Economic Development Plan and the growth of that industry here on Dinétah will require us to be able to make the road improvements necessary to build out a tourism corridor

¹⁴ https://www.nec.navajo-nsn.gov/Portals/0/Reports/Navajo%20Fatal%20Car%20Crashes%20Report%202005-2014_opt.pdf

that we call the Navajo Grand Circle. Too many tourism operators currently launch trips from Las Vegas, Nevada that orbit the Navajo Nation but do not actually land here. The Navajo Grand Circle will require roads that can provide safe passage for tourists from point to point: from Las Vegas to Page to Monument Valley to Shiprock to Crown Point to Hopi to Tuba City to the Grand Canyon then back to Las Vegas. We hope to see you and your families and friends on the Navajo Grand Circle some day.

NAVAJO NATION'S TOP TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Promote tribal sovereignty by retroceding Secretarial approval over tribes who have demonstrated their own capacity for federal regulatory compliance.

We need the Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Interior to retrocede their authority over tribal roads in cases where tribal governments, like the Navajo Nation, have already assumed treatment as a state from U.S. EPA.

Protect the integrity of tribal road funds so that they do not subsidize non-tribal roads.

Congress should redefine, for the purpose of the National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI), the definition of "roads" to access routes for vehicular ground surface traffic (explicitly excluding walking paths, dog mush routes and canoe trails; Congress should require all proposed roads included within NTTFI to be supported by data, both going forward and retroactively; and Congress should prohibit Tribal Transportation Program funds from being invested in non-BIA or non-tribal road projects.

Harmonize Agency Guidance with Law to make Navajo roads safe.

Congress should authorize a workable definition for maintenance for earthen roads so that the BIA's definition is consistent with other federal lands agencies and permits the application of gravel and other safety activities within existing road perimeters.

Provide separate tribal bridge funding that does not compete with road funding.

Congress should reauthorize the tribal bridge program at a level that exceeds its prior authorization of \$14 million annually.

CONCLUSION

The roads on Dinétah have carried precious cargo, commerce and correspondence across the Navajo Nation for generations. They even once carried the uranium that the United States said was needed to protect all of our freedoms. But today we need these roads need to carry the dreams of the Navajo Nation For that we need federal policies that support the emergence of a Navajo road transportation system built for the 21st century. Thank you for allowing us to share with you our vision for what those policies should like.

Statement of Nicholas Guida, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Tamarack Aerospace Group Corporation, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Sam Graves of Missouri

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves and Members of the Committee, thank you for accepting my testimony to the committee on "The Administration's Priorities for Transportation Infrastructure." I am Nick Guida and I'm the founder and CEO of Tamarack Aerospace Group Corporation.

Climate change is of course one of the most significant challenges currently facing human civilization. Despite aviation being a relatively small contributor of overall global carbon dioxide emissions at 2-3%, aviation's statistical position is often cited in the media and that trend will no doubt continue as aviation continues to grow. (Graver, Zhang, & Rutherford, 2019). As a result, the environmental impact of flying is consistently breaking into the consciousness of passengers and the public alike, influencing their perception of aviation.

Aviation must leverage all legacy and especially new technologies to constantly strengthen a perception that the industry proactively supports sustainability and science that will mitigate the negative outcomes of climate change.

America and the world need to aggressively use all available current technologies to reduce the metastasizing carbon footprint and not ignore any pending tech-

nologies—including pending solutions like bio-fuels, electric and hydrogen propulsion—as they become commonly available over time. America needs to open its eyes to all current possibilities, especially those that are not widely known but can be so-called game-changers, game-changers that also make good business sense.

One such new, and game-changing technology available right now and gaining notice by the aviation industry and regulators, is Active Winglets™, developed by Tamarack Aerospace Group. Tamarack is based in Sandpoint, Idaho—we are a growing American company built on invention.

Active Winglets look very much like the curved-upward passive winglets you see on the ends of many commercial aircraft wings, except Active Winglets have an extension and an autonomous sensing system that in a fraction of a second mechanically adjusts the wing tips to any amount of turbulence and, in so doing, allows for the most efficient, fuel-saving and flight smoothing capabilities available today.

Patented Active Winglet innovation delivers a CO₂ and fuel burn reduction of up to 33% as compared to an approximate 4% fuel savings from different types of traditional winglets seen on many current commercial, business and military aircraft. Active Winglets increase the number of fuel efficient and safer non-stop flights, and reduce the amount of maintenance needed for all aircraft. Active Winglet technology stands out in many ways amongst other sustainability initiatives as a sustainability supporting immediate solution for reducing aviation's carbon footprint to meet industry goals (Forbes Magazine, Tamarack Aerospace Group, 2020 and former aeronautical professor and commercial pilot, NASA astronaut Byron Lichtenberg, 2021, to cite just a few of the multiple sources).

There are several steps that aircraft operators can put in place to significantly reduce emissions. The science and market demands are dictating that we need to act now. Technology such as Sustainable Aviation Fuels are absolutely viable solutions but face significant scalability obstacles, carbon sequestration and offsetting would be required on a vast scale to have a significant impact and the introduction of newer, more fuel-efficient aircraft which emit less CO₂, will not be sufficient on its own to offset the growth in the number of air transport movements.

Active Winglets are a proven technology that has been installed on more than one-hundred-and-twenty Cessna Jets, has been certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), and can be retrofitted onto several current aircraft variants, including larger single-aisle commercial, cargo and military aircraft ... even drones. Active Winglets are cost-effective and can be rapidly retrofitted to the existing fleet as well as future designs to improve safety, mitigate turbulence, reduce noise and other pollution associated with aviation and reduce the downtime and need for aircraft maintenance.

The Active Winglet technology is economically viable, paying the investment for the modification back to the aircraft operator in a short period and can have a significant benefit for the existing as well as future fleets of aircraft. Of course, if business and government can't make an economic argument for adopting specific actions, those actions will naturally fail. Conservative estimates on narrow bodied and specific military aircraft, demonstrate that Tamarack's Active Winglets can reduce fuel burn by 14–20%, while there is proven fuel savings for many business airframes of up to 33%, providing significant cost savings and having a meaningful impact now on aviation's carbon crisis.

A case study conducted by Tamarack estimates, for instance, that if Active Winglets were to be fitted onto the commercial jet narrow-bodied fleet (Airbus A320 / Boeing 737 variants) alone, 1.6 billion tons of CO₂ would be saved by 2040, reducing the emissions gap by approximately 20%. Tamarack's technology offers a greater reduction in fuel burn and carbon emissions for existing aircraft than any other retrofittable solution available at present and certainly will make a demonstrable fuel savings and carbon footprint reduction as part of a new aircraft build.

More context about winglet technology. Winglets are small aerofoils applied vertically to the wing tips and are a positive addition to aircraft as they reduce drag and increase efficiency. They work by reducing the aerodynamic drag associated with vortices. Vortices form due to the pressure differentiation between the low-pressure upper wing surface and the high-pressure lower wing surface. At the wing tip, air is free to move from the regions of high pressure to the regions of low pressure forming a circular movement of air which trails from the wing tip (Anderson, 2017). The creation of vortices causes a redistribution of the surface pressure over the wing termed induced drag (Anderson, Introduction to Flight, 2016). The advantages of Active Winglets are significant and address the vortices and fuel usage challenges more than other winglet technologies; they are retrofittable and therefore can improve today's aircraft, as well as those coming off the production line; they are largely cost effective to implement; and are a 'win, win' as they pay back economically and environmentally.

The Active Winglet uses the combination of a wing extension to significantly increase aspect ratio with the most optimal winglet to reduce induced drag. Traditionally, the most optimal winglet design is associated with more structural reinforcement, but the Active Winglet doesn't need the structural reinforcement that common passive winglets do.

Active Winglets reap maximum fuel efficiency benefits without subtracting the inefficiencies that occur due to additional structural requirements. This is achieved using load alleviation at the wing tip.

Additionally, Active Winglet modified aircraft need shorter runways for landing and takeoff and get higher faster than aircraft without the modification. For instance, it can take a Cessna Jet with Active Winglets to reach 41,000 feet in less than 30 minutes, while a similar unmodified business jet will have to reach higher altitudes after climbing in steps and may never reach 41,000 feet at all, depending on flight conditions and the time of the trip (AOPA reporting Active Winglet flight, 2021). As mentioned, once an aircraft gets to higher altitudes faster, the carbon footprint is greatly reduced.

Tamarack commends the committee on its backing of current U.S. government programs to encourage innovation in aviation and we hope that kind of assistance increases. This committee, for instance, is well aware of government grants for emissions innovative companies. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions and Noise (CLEEN) program has already contributed \$225 million through phases I and II of CLEEN, and the industry has contributed \$388 million. The 2020 grants under CLEEN III are to be issued soon (FAA, 2020). Tamarack will be applying for the next tranche of grants in order to go through the certification process for additional airframes. Meanwhile, we hope the committee will continue to encourage all technologies and efforts to embrace business cases for climate solutions.

Part of the reason that aviation is gaining so much attention relative to reducing the carbon footprint is an immediate need, like so many other industries, to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels in the face of expected continued rapid growth (UNFCCC, 2014). Active Winglets and other technologies available now or soon warrant additional focus by regulators and the entire aviation community.

The coronavirus pandemic has shrunk the world fleet because of airlines going out of business and older, less efficient aircraft being retired early. From 2020 onwards, this will unquestionably deliver reduced CO₂ emissions lower than previously projected. However, this is not the solution to aviation's carbon emission challenges. Although passenger numbers dropped by 2690 million (60%) in 2020 compared to 2019, passenger numbers are predicted to recover to 2019 levels within the next 3–5 years (ICAO, 2021). Furthermore, in 2020 compared to 2019, approximately USD \$370 billion of gross passenger operating revenues of airlines were lost (ICAO, 2021). This unprecedented event could present a major opportunity for operators to reset their thinking on emissions targets and implement sustainable practices in every aspect of their new, reshaped organizations.

Aircraft are reliant on fossil fuels and with no clear path or timeframe to a zero-emission alternative, ICAO predicts a large gap in the emissions targets set for the period of 2020 to 2040. There are several steps that aircraft operators can put in place to significantly reduce emissions. The science and market demands are dictating that we need to act now. Technology such as Sustainable Aviation Fuels are absolutely viable solutions but face significant scalability obstacles, carbon sequestration and offsetting would be required on a vast scale to have a significant impact and the introduction of newer, more fuel-efficient aircraft which emit less CO₂, will not be sufficient on its own to offset the growth in the number of air transport movements.

Active Winglet technology is economically viable, paying the investment back in a short period and can have a significant benefit for the existing as well as future fleets of aircraft. Of course, if business and government can't make an economic argument for adopting specific actions, those actions will naturally fail. Conservative estimates on narrow bodied aircraft, demonstrate that Tamarack's Active Winglets can reduce fuel burn by 14–20%, providing significant cost savings and having a meaningful impact on aviation's carbon crisis.

As availability of Sustainable Aviation Fuels increases and technology advances, the aviation sector will see substantial reductions in carbon emissions until zero emissions aircraft can be developed. However, where a near-term solution is needed, fitting Active Winglets would be a significant step forward for operators looking to obtain carbon neutral operations, particularly when combined with a host of other sustainable initiatives. Tamarack hopes this committee considers all emission reducing options including Active Winglet technology that stands out as an exciting pros-

pect which can reduce the emissions gap by over 1.6 billion tons (-20%), it is available now and is scalable.

As mentioned, Tamarack is growing. We have additional primary service and installation centers in South Carolina and England and other support facilities in more than twenty other locations across the United States and world-wide. We have been growing our facilities, staff, and customer base, despite the pandemic because our current and prospective customers want the innovative capabilities only Tamarack Active Winglets can provide to business, commercial and military aviation.

Tamarack is currently working with U.S. and international aviation regulators, along with aviation associations like NBAA and GAMA, noted academia representatives and getting constant feedback from existing and future customers, including the U.S. military. We are confident that U.S. innovation tempered by prudent government regulation will meet or possibly exceed carbon footprint reduction goals specifically outlined for the aviation industry. Those ambitious goals will only be achieved through cooperation and teamwork involving all stakeholders and by climbing the very steep education curve that recognizes and adopts the most pragmatic innovations addressing our climate crisis.

Tamarack thinks of itself as a good corporate citizen for America and also the world and believes news about its sustainability-supporting technology, and other avenues for aviation to reduce carbon emissions, will be recognized by this committee as a current way to quickly provide a solution to help the growing aviation industry reach its carbon footprint reducing goals.

Tamarack looks forward to providing details and science-based information alluded to in these comments and will eagerly cooperate with this committee to embrace solutions that bolster the reputation of aviation as we achieve the climate-saving goals we all want.

Statement of Amy Cohen, Cofounder, Families for Safe Streets, Submitted for the Record by Hon. John Garamendi

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the hearing with USDOT Commissioner Pete Buttigieg. Over 40,000 Americans die on our roadways every year. You will likely hear a lot about the statistics and the numbers. But today, I want to remind each and every one of you, behind every number, there is a life, a devastated family, and a heartbroken community.

This crisis demands bold action. Families for Safe Streets has joined with the Road to Zero Coalition, the Vision Zero Network, Toward Zero Deaths and hundreds of other organizations urging President Biden and his administration to change that by making a public pledge to achieve zero traffic deaths by 2050. Today, I urge you to join with us and include a commitment to #ZeroTrafficDeaths in the infrastructure plan.

It is 2,725 days since my 12-year-old son Sammy was struck and killed by a speeding driver in front of our home in Brooklyn, New York. 2,725 painful days since I last kissed him goodbye, touched his face, smelled his unique Sammy smell, saw him chatting with his sister, made him breakfast, and gave him a farewell hug.

Every parent thinks their child is special, but Sammy really was amazing. He was curious about the world, loved to ask questions, carefully pondered the answers, and then seemed to always have an unquenchable desire to know more. He was a budding renaissance man and excelled in sports with fierce determination. He played soccer, baseball and hockey. Just weeks before he died, he rode his bike with my husband Gary in the NYC century ride, and at 12 years of age, was the youngest one to complete the 100-mile ride.

Gary called me from a rest break at the 85-mile marker. He said that Sammy was exhausted so they'd be stopping early and heading home. But somehow, Sammy mustered the strength to get back on his bike and ride for the final, most hilly portion of the course.

I thought my love was so strong that I could create an invisible shield around my children. Sammy was smart, street savvy and did not take risks. We lived in a safe, residential neighborhood where children played on the side streets, though I never allowed mine to do so. But every year, thousands of parents like me learn that their shield is fallible. That our roadways are deadly.

My husband said to me days after Sammy died, if only we were living in London, Sammy would still be alive. We had just gone there on vacation two months earlier. London had just adopted Vision Zero, lowered their speed limit and had signs posted everywhere that *20 is Plenty*.

On our final day in London, Gary took Sammy to a professional soccer game and a soccer stadium tour. Sammy said it was the happiest day of his life. I never imagined he would have so few days to live after that.

After he died, I was so full of pain and it had to go somewhere or it would consume me. So I started speaking out. Soon, I joined with others and helped form Families for Safe Streets. Our mission is to confront the preventable epidemic of traffic violence.

We chose the word “confront” and epidemic very intentionally because, just like with COVID-19, traffic crashes are preventable and we have the “vaccine”. But somehow, we still call them accidents—as if there is nothing we can do. We share our stories to push back on this complacency. We started with a few dozen members in New York City and now have a dozen chapters across the country with more in formation. We share our tears and we are making waves, from demanding action at vigils to holding lobby days at our city halls and capitals. We seek not just to raise awareness because we will never be able to “educate” our way out of this problem. We demand legislative and policy change to redesign our streets, lower speed limits, use existing technology such as automated enforcement and vehicle safety features. We advocate to get dangerous drivers off the road, support crash victims and so much more.

We start with a single premise—“zero” is possible and it is the only morally acceptable goal. No loss of life in a preventable crash is justifiable.

The Biden administration inherits a catastrophe that uniquely bedevils the United States among high-income countries. U.S. traffic fatalities rose 11.5% from 2010 to 2018 while the European Union recorded a drop of 23%. Europeans treat road deaths as preventable.

The surge in traffic violence has continued even as many Americans work and learn at home because of the pandemic. In 2020, the motor-vehicle fatality rate spiked 24% on a miles-driven basis compared to the year prior, it marked the sixth consecutive month of a distressing new pattern: Americans are driving less but dying at higher rates.

The good news is there is so much we can do. Canada, another country with a lot of open road, has achieved a traffic mortality rate of less than half of that in the United States, thanks to smart street design and graduated licensing. Norway achieved a more than four-fold decline in fatalities since 1985 and reached zero traffic deaths in Oslo in 2019 by lowering speeds and providing safe space for people walking and biking. Similar strategies in Bogotá, Colombia, are credited with a 27% reduction in traffic fatalities over three years.

We recognize that the President and Congress face many challenges during this difficult time in our country and that the new administration’s immediate focus is on the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused such harm and suffering. But the pandemic has also reminded us how precious life is. While the focus on COVID-19 is desperately needed, we cannot also overlook its impact on our roads.

Stepping up leadership to address the health crisis of 40,000 preventable traffic deaths each year can reinforce the nation’s path forward to invest in our infrastructure and *Build Back Better*.

There is so much we can do to make our streets safe for all people. The U.S. can reach the goal of zero traffic deaths, saving lives and improving more affordable access to everyday needs. But to do so, we need to make a commitment as a nation, to prioritize safety using the most effective and equitable strategies. A federal commitment to eliminate fatalities would require that the U.S. develop a plan and commit funding and policy imperative to:

- Double down on what works through proven, evidence-based strategies that support equity
- Advance life-saving technology in vehicles and infrastructure
- Prioritize safety by adopting a Safe Systems Approach that ties federal funding to saving lives and sets national road safety mandates
- Support crash victims, like victims of other crimes, even when drivers are not criminally charged

For more details on how we can eliminate traffic deaths on our roadways, see the Road to Zero Report.

Families like ours know only too well that there is far too much at stake not to act now. Please, on behalf of my son Sammy and all of our members who mourn lives lost or are forever changed, I hope that the infrastructure plan will include a commitment to #ZeroTrafficDeaths.

Families for Safe Streets (FSS) confronts the epidemic of traffic violence by advocating for life-saving changes and providing support to those who have been im-

pacted by crashes. Comprised of individuals who have been injured or lost loved ones, FSS was founded in 2014 in New York City and is growing as a national movement with chapters across the country.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FROM HON. PETER A. DEFAZIO TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. After receiving PPP loans last year, small business contractors that qualified for loan forgiveness are facing uncertainty. FHWA recently issued guidance about whether, and the terms under which, contractors may be required to credit back some of the assistance. We appreciate the Department's work to date to help clarify this issue and provide certainty.

Mr. Secretary, will you continue to work with members of the engineering community, state Departments of Transportation, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure consistent implementation of this guidance?

ANSWER. Yes, I commit to working with Congress, members of the engineering community, State departments of transportation (DOT), and other relevant stakeholders to ensure consistent implementation of FHWA's "Treatment of Paycheck Protection Program Funds for Architectural and Engineering Consultants Guidance" and applicable governmentwide requirements. FHWA actively participates in regular meetings with representatives of State DOTs, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and other members of the engineering community to address questions or concerns on Federal guidance to ensure consistent implementation.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. SAM GRAVES TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. During the hearing and in several press reports, you emphasized a very broad transportation agenda for the Administration. Will added capacity to the existing federal-aid highway system play a role in the Administration's vision of the future of transportation? Electric vehicles must drive our Nation's roads, highways, and interstates just as combustion engine cars, so are the needs for expanded capacity a part of the vision?

ANSWER. DOT does not impose any one-size-fits-all solutions to solving the transportation challenges facing our states and communities. We will continue to support state transportation departments as they undertake this work, and we recognize and value the role of the states in deciding how to prioritize the use of formula dollars. The nation faces a trillion-dollar backlog of needed repairs and we have fallen to 13th in the world in infrastructure. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments will help modernize bridges, highways, roads, and main streets that are in most critical need of repair, with a focus on making our nation's roads safer, making our transportation systems cleaner, more accessible, and more resilient to climate impacts, creating jobs and economic growth, and enabling all Americans to share in the benefits.

Question 2. President Biden has made it a priority to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). Last Congress, there were several hearings held in both Chambers with witnesses underscoring how dependent we are on China for critical rare earth minerals processing needed for producing EV batteries.

a. California Governor Newsom has set a goal of halting the sale of internal combustion engine vehicles in California by 2035. Does the Administration support the goal of banning the sale of traditional vehicles?

ANSWER. We support working with the American auto industry and ensuring that U.S. industries lead the world in our clean energy future. We are already seeing many automakers promoting exciting new zero emission vehicles with longer ranges, excellent performance, and all-wheel drive. Working with industry means using whatever tools we have at our disposal to support clean transportation with high quality American jobs, whether that is strengthening our fuel economy standards, delivering on the President's vision for a network of 500,000 electric vehicle chargers by 2030, expanding domestic production of critical materials, or supporting Amer-

ican innovation. We are also committed to ensuring that we deliver the benefits of a clean transportation fleet to all communities, especially those that have borne a disproportionate burden of exposure to air pollution from cars and trucks. As we move to a zero-emission fleet, we need to ensure that our auto workers are not left behind. We need to be a leader in the domestic manufacturing of auto parts, including batteries and charging equipment, in the United States and provide the tools to make sure our disadvantaged and minority owned businesses and auto workers benefit from the transition to electrification.

- b. Do you believe that the term zero emission vehicle must include full life-cycle analysis and not just an examination of vehicle's tailpipe emissions?

ANSWER. The Administration has already begun transitioning the Federal fleet to zero-emission vehicles and fully supports the increased use of zero-emission vehicles nationwide. Vehicle life-cycle emissions analysis is a critical component to reaching our 2030 emission reduction targets and better understanding the full scope of carbon emissions in our transportation sector. To yield further improvements in life-cycle emissions, we are committed to the development of green materials and renewable energy technology.

- c. Does it concern you that places like San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; and the Washington, D.C. metro area are some of the only places where average salaries are high enough to afford the average priced electric vehicle?

ANSWER. The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to ensuring that Americans in all communities benefit from the clean energy transition, especially those in rural areas—who drive more—and those that have borne a disproportionate burden of exposure to air pollution from vehicles.

EVs have been shown to be cheaper to run and maintain than traditional internal combustion engine vehicles. For example, AAA has calculated to travel 15,000 miles, electricity for a compact EV cost \$1,255 less than gasoline, and annual maintenance for an EV costs an average of \$330 less. Today, compact, American-made EVs start at around \$26,000, and electric pickups start at a little over \$41,000. Of course, this may still be out of reach for some Americans, but developments in battery and charging technology, the auto industry's release of a wider range of increasingly affordable EVs, and additional support from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the EV domestic supply chain are expected to contribute to a decrease in the upfront purchase costs of EVs. The Administration has also advocated for tax incentives that would further reduce the upfront cost of EVs.

Because EVs are more than just cars, the Administration will implement the \$5 billion in funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to replace diesel transit vehicles and electrify our yellow school bus fleet. These investments will set us on a path to 100 percent clean buses, while ensuring that the American workforce is trained to operate and maintain this 21st century infrastructure.

- d. As Secretary of Transportation, how are you balancing affordability and safety to make sure that my constituents are not compelled to buy expensive cars that may not meet their needs?

ANSWER. We can and must have both safety and affordability. Studies are finding that electric vehicles are safe and have held up well in crash-worthiness tests in comparison to gasoline-powered vehicles. Battery technology has continued to improve, both in terms of increased travel ranges and safety. Further, safety testing and standards apply to electric vehicles just as they apply to vehicles with internal combustion engines. Additionally, the auto industry is demonstrating its commitment to a voluntary shift to EV manufacturing and is in the process of rolling out new hybrid and EV models ranging from sub-compacts to pick-up trucks that are aimed at meeting a wide variety of financial, performance, and aesthetic needs.

- e. Given the issues surrounding the solvency within the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and that EV drivers use our bridges and roads while not paying taxes to support the infrastructure as those who pay federal and state gas taxes at the pump, do you support a policy for electric vehicles to pay their fair share into the HTF? Especially given that EVs weigh more than their internal combustion engine equivalent.

ANSWER. We need to find a path towards a more sustainable, resilient transportation system—and the funding to make that possible. I look forward to working with the Committee and the Congress to address our long-standing Highway Trust Fund challenges.

Question 3. Small electric drones are dramatically improving the safety, efficiency and carbon footprint of infrastructure repair and construction projects. States are using small, US-made drones to inspect bridges with 3-D imaging technology; utili-

ties are using drones to inspect power lines to find flaws before they start fires; and roads are being built with surveys prepared by drones. How does the Department of Transportation (DOT) intend to maximize the benefits of drones to improve our country's infrastructure by:

- a. Providing opportunities for state and local government, as well as regulated utilities, to use federal funds to purchase or use drone technology to improve U.S. infrastructure?

ANSWER. The Department's focus is enabling activities and benefits from drones by safely and securely integrating unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into the Nation's airspace. When it comes to UAS, safety is not just about the aircraft itself, but how that aircraft can safely integrate into communities. A wide range of industries are already starting to see benefits from use of UAS—from agriculture to construction to infrastructure inspection.

- b. Allowing drones to be operated persistently at very low-altitudes beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) to conduct safe and efficient infrastructure inspections?

ANSWER. The Department works closely with stakeholders to use drones in their transportation and infrastructure programs. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is working on policies and oversight mechanisms to safely enable BVLOS. The FAA's BEYOND Program collaborates with eight State, Local and Tribal governments to focus on enabling BVLOS operations that are repeatable, scalable, and economically viable across rural, suburban and urban environments.

The FAA also routinely engages with the drone industry and other key stakeholders through the Drone Advisory Committee (DAC). The DAC includes representation from state and local governments and provides another avenue of cooperation to address important UAS integration issues. Another initiative aimed at local government is Connected by Drones. This initiative, which features regular outreach to more than 100 State and Local entities, was specifically developed to create a network among local governments, public safety, schools, and the FAA, fostering collaboration and cooperation.

- c. Enabling increasing levels of autonomy necessary to drive efficiency and maintain U.S. leadership in the global drone economy?

ANSWER. When it comes to certification of autonomous software, the FAA is pursuing regulations that are performance-based to promote safety while allowing UAS-related innovation. The FAA remains committed to performance-based rules. Focusing on the top-level safety performance that is expected, rather than dictating specific detailed design(s) that can meet that safety expectation will help drive innovation and maintain U.S. leadership in the global drone economy.

Question 4. To fully realize the safety and efficiency benefits of commercial drones, pilots need permission to fly just beyond line of sight (BVLOS). For instance, unionized utility workers inspecting a transmission tower could fly behind the tower, bridge inspectors could fly beneath the bridge deck, and railroad workers could fly just above long, stationary trains. Current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules make BVLOS flights extremely challenging, even flights below the height of surrounding infrastructure where manned aircraft are unlikely to transit. What actions will the Administration take in 2021 to enable, in a risk-based manner, widespread operation of drones BVLOS this year?

ANSWER. The Department's main focus is ensuring integration is done safely and securely. The DOT's regulatory framework will need to ensure safety while enabling the full potential of this industry. When it comes to Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), safety is not just about the aircraft itself, but how that aircraft can safely integrate into the airspace across communities.

Cooperation among all levels of government is important for the safe integration of drones into the airspace. The FAA has a number of initiatives to work closely with stakeholders, including the Drone Advisory Committee, which includes representation from local governments.

Question 5. The DOT is responsible for a lot of our Nation's essential functions: air traffic control, passenger rail, roadway safety, and more. The Nation needs DOT employees to do their jobs in person. Please provide an update on DOT's efforts to vaccinate its essential workers. Further, besides vaccine supply, has the DOT launched any unique partnerships to get its employees to vaccine appointments, and are there any best practices that the DOT can share?

ANSWER. The Department agrees that transportation workers are critical to providing essential passenger travel and freight transportation throughout the U.S. and worldwide. For example, transporting individuals to testing and vaccine sites; transporting other essential workers, like healthcare professionals, to their workplaces;

and keeping essential domestic and global supply chains functioning, including the medical supply chain for hospitals and health care facilities.

In terms of specific efforts and best practices for vaccinating DOT employees, the Department has been successful in helping vaccinate its own essential workers. In April 2021, DOT pursued an agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce to have its eligible employees voluntarily vaccinated through an effort to vaccinate Federal workers who work in the National Capital Region at the Gaithersburg, MD, campus of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. DOT also worked with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to have additional eligible employees voluntarily vaccinated through a subsequent effort to vaccinate Federal workers at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. Additionally, as vaccinations were just beginning, DOT's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proactively identified key workers such as air traffic controllers and safety inspectors geographically. In at least one instance, when a local jurisdiction reached out with available vaccinations that may have otherwise expired, FAA was able to alert its pre-identified, critical employees in the region, resulting in the vaccination of a few hundred of its eligible employees. Moreover, the Department and its subcomponents have implemented the use of administrative leave for employees for vaccinations as promulgated by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.

As of January 19, 2022, the Department has a 91 percent vaccination rate (employees who are vaccinated with at least one dose) across our workforce, with the vast majority being fully vaccinated.

Question 6. Recently, a DOT-sponsored study released by the Volpe Center Institute demonstrated that fully autonomous long-haul trucks can lead to more jobs, productivity, and economic growth. Per the study, fully autonomous long-haul trucks present an opportunity to spur an additional \$111 billion in aggregate investment spending across the U.S. economy, increase total U.S. employment by 26,400–35,100 jobs per year on average, raise annual earnings for all U.S. workers by more than \$200 per worker per year, produce welfare increases of nearly \$23 billion (up to \$69 per person per year), and increase GDP by at least 0.3 percent, or more than \$68 billion, by year 30 of the analysis period.

What concrete steps is the DOT taking to promote safe and swift deployment for automated driving technology for trucking?

ANSWER. The Department has released multiple guidance documents to ensure that both automated vehicles (AV) and commercial motor vehicles (CMV) are developed, tested, and deployed in a safe manner. The Administration is currently assessing additional steps to encourage innovation while ensuring safety for the public and workers—as well as high quality jobs in the transportation sector. To do so, we remain in close communications with all stakeholders to find the best way forward for safe AV and CMV deployment.

The Department's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office (ITS JPO), in close coordination with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), continues to research the technical aspects of safe platooning deployments. FMCSA has also worked to produce test data assessing variations in heavy duty vehicle stopping distances, and potential impacts on platooning operations.

Question 7. You have indicated support for creating a passenger rail trust fund with the potential to annually fund Amtrak at historically high levels. Please explain in detail the plans for this trust fund, including funding sources and whether it involves new taxes and fees on individuals and companies, including on freight railroads and Amtrak ticket purchasers.

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is a generational investment in America's transportation network that will make meaningful public investment in passenger rail. Under the advanced Appropriations section in Division J, Amtrak received \$22 billion (\$16 billion for the National Network, and \$6 billion for the Northeast Corridor). The underlying authorization included in the BIL provides for further potential investment through an additional \$19.2 billion for Amtrak (\$12.6 billion for the National Network and \$6.5B for the Northeast Corridor).

Question 8. If a passenger rail trust fund is created, will money be available to fund private sector passenger rail entities and projects? Will you promise to include funding opportunities for the private sector in the creation of the trust fund, including for passenger rail improvements and railroads?

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law offers tremendous opportunities for passenger rail investment. In particular, the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program received \$5 billion in advanced appropriations, and an additional \$5 billion is authorized to

make a transformational investment in passenger rail. The CRISI program has been critical for providing rail investment in both public and privately-owned rail infrastructure.

Question 9. Will the proposed creation of a passenger rail trust fund include any taxes, fees, obligations or burdens on the freight rail industry to support it? Will you promise that freight railroads will have no obligations to support a passenger rail trust fund or suffer any penalties or additional obligations arising from its creation?

ANSWER. The Administration is already working to implement the provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), which does not include taxes or fees on the freight rail industry.

Question 10. We have heard you outline President Biden’s desire to add 500,000 EV charging points over the next 10 years to help support the expanded adoption and use of EVs that currently account for roughly two percent of all new vehicle sales. With respect to 500,000 EV charging points:

- a. Is the DOT involved in this effort? If not, which agency has overall responsible for this effort?
- b. Are those public DC fast chargers (which can refuel a battery EV in 30 minutes to an hour) or Level 2 (which can refuel a battery EV in 4–8 hours)? What is the mix?
- c. How many battery EVs would that support? We understand California found that about 1.5 million chargers to support 8 million EVs in California or about 25% of the total light-duty fleet (about 32 million vehicles registered in California).

ANSWER to a.–c. DOT is working with the U.S. Department of Energy and other Federal agencies to deliver on transformational investments in clean transportation infrastructure. Through a combination of programs, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will support a transformational acceleration in deployment of a mix of chargers in apartment buildings, in public parking, throughout communities, and as a robust fast charging along our nation’s roadways. The type of electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) would vary depending on the installation location and its core users.

DOT and DOE have stood up a Joint Office of Energy and Transportation to provide technical assistance for the deployment of \$7.5 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to build out a national EV charging network. DOT released guidance to provide states with additional information on the deployment of the BIL-created \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula (NEVI) Program, including guidance on recommended charging capacity for charging stations. On June 9, 2022, as directed in BIL, FHWA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that sets minimum standards and requirements for EV charging infrastructure funded through the NEVI program. Alongside the NPRM, FHWA released a set of FAQs to help states draft their EV charging plans, which are due on August 1, 2022. These FAQs cover a broad range of topics, including eligible costs, equity, workforce, and more. In addition, on June 8, 2022, DOT and DOE established an EV Working Group in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and put out a request for nominations.

Question 11. Understanding that the DOT and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are reviewing the Trump Administration’s previously finalized auto standards for Model Years 2021–2026, can you explain the DOT’s timeline for when any modifications will be proposed or finalized and how will coordination between EPA and DOT be assured?

ANSWER. In the January 20, 2021, Executive Order, President Biden directed NHTSA to review the 2020 “The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule for Model Years 2021–2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks” final rule. The President further declared the Biden-Harris Administration’s policy to improve public health and protect our environment, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to bolster resilience to the impacts of climate change, and to prioritize both environmental justice and the creation of the well-paying union jobs necessary to deliver on these goals. In March 2022, DOT issued final CAFE standards for Model Years 2024–2026, and DOT coordinated with all appropriate parties, including EPA, to finalize this rule. DOT and EPA have been and will continue to work collaboratively on fuel economy standards and greenhouse gas emission standards for future years.

- a. Do you think the average cost of a new vehicle purchase will increase or decrease compared to prices today?

ANSWER. It is difficult to forecast the average cost of a new vehicle, given a variety of factors that impact price; however, NHTSA's final rule estimates that drivers will save close to \$100 billion in fuel savings for new vehicles sold by 2030.

- b. How are the DOT and NHTSA viewing the balance between vehicle fuel economy improvements, safety, affordability, and investing in electric drive technologies?

ANSWER. The Department's number one priority will always be safety. We also have the chance to transform our transportation sector into a 21st century system that makes transportation options more affordable and reliable for all Americans, creates more communities of opportunity, accelerates equitable economic growth, and increases global competitiveness. We're already seeing many automakers promoting exciting new zero emission vehicles with longer ranges, excellent performance, and all-wheel drive. That means using whatever tools we have at our disposal to support clean transportation, whether that's strengthening our fuel economy standards, delivering on the President's promise to build up to 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations, or supporting American innovation. I am also committed to ensuring that we deliver the benefits of a clean transportation fleet to all communities, especially those that have borne a disproportionate burden of exposure to air pollution from cars and trucks.

Question 12. The United States has consistently supported the negotiation and implementation of Open Skies agreements since 1992, with strong support from both Democratic and Republican administrations. Will the Biden Administration continue to uphold this Open Skies policy without imposing conditions or requirements that were never agreed to nor included in the negotiated Open Skies agreements, including the historic Open Skies agreement with the European Union?

ANSWER. Open Skies has been the foundation of U.S. international air transportation policy since 1992. The policy has enabled the U.S. aviation industry to support more than 10 million American jobs and \$1.7 trillion in economic activity. We continue to recognize the great importance of Open Skies to the Department's diverse stakeholders, including airports, airlines, labor, members of the traveling and shipping public.

The Department understands our statutory requirement to act consistently with the international binding obligations of the United States Government under all international air transport agreements to which the United States is a party, including the U.S.-EU Air Transport Agreement. The Department is also committed to ensuring a level playing field for U.S. airlines in international markets based on our Open Skies agreements, and Congress has provided the Department with statutory and regulatory tools to address anticompetitive behavior.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG,
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Secretary Buttigieg, we are in the process of developing the Union Station Expansion Project (SEP). The Federal Railroad Administration is currently reviewing public comments on their draft environmental impact statement. The SEP seeks to turn the station into a truly 21st century multimodal transportation hub with more rail options going to the Southeast and the Northeast Corridor, intercity and intracity bus options, Metro access and options to use active transportation.

- a. Will you work to ensure that the SEP is not car-centric and accommodates all of these modes of transportation, especially those that serve lower income communities, like buses?

ANSWER. Washington Union Station is the National Capital Region's principal intermodal transportation hub and I was honored to meet with many of its essential and dedicated front-line workers in one of my first public events as Secretary. I recognize the importance of the Union Station Expansion Project to support current and future rail service and operational needs; facilitate intermodal transportation; preserve and maintain the historic station and its features; and integrate with the adjacent neighborhoods, businesses, and planned development. To address on-going concerns, on February 3, 2021, FRA notified stakeholders that the agency decided to revisit project planning for the preferred alternative and ensure that Washington Union Station remains an intermodal station for trains, buses, and active transportation. We are committed to working to meet the transportation needs of all communities, including lower income communities and other communities that have been historically overburdened and underserved by our Nation's transportation systems.

- b. In addition, the SEP will improve the station's infrastructure, enhance efficiency, create new employment opportunities, accommodate projected ridership growth, and reduce carbon emissions. Given that Union Station is a federal fa-

cility, will you work with my office to ensure that federal investment in the SEP is a top priority and that you will include it in your upcoming Build Back Better funding proposal?

ANSWER. I am committed to working with you and other stakeholders to ensure Union Station meets the needs of the District and region for generations to come.

Question 2. As Co-chair of the Quiet Skies Caucus, I am very concerned about the impact of aircraft noise on our communities. In December 2020, I led a letter from members of Congress to then-President-elect Biden, asking him to appoint individuals to the FAA who understand the gravity of aircraft noise and would work with the Quiet Skies Caucus on these issues. I also led a letter from members of Congress to the FAA earlier this month calling attention to the FAA's recently released a nationwide survey, which showed that people are far more annoyed by aircraft noise than the FAA expected. The FAA, and the Department of Transportation, must do more to combat aviation noise.

Are you, Secretary Buttigieg, committed to working with members of Congress and the Quiet Skies Caucus to reduce the impact of aviation noise on our constituents?

ANSWER. Yes, it is critical that we continue to take action to address the impact of aircraft noise on communities. I am committed to working with you to address this issue and will ensure that the FAA works with key stakeholders, including communities, airports, air carriers, and state and local governments to identify potential ways to better address aircraft noise.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. RODNEY DAVIS TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. A recent DOT study found that fully autonomous long-haul trucks can lead to more jobs, productivity, and economic growth. What is the Department doing to ensure timely deployment of automated driving technology in the trucking industry?

ANSWER. The Department has released multiple guidance documents to ensure that both automated vehicle (AV) and commercial motor vehicles (CMV) are developed, tested, and deployed in a safe manner. The Administration is currently assessing additional steps to encourage innovation while ensuring safety for the public and workers—as well as high quality jobs in the transportation sector. To do so, we remain in close communications with all stakeholders to find the best way forward for safe AV and CMV deployment.

The Department's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office (ITS JPO), in close coordination with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), continues to research the technical aspects of safe platooning deployments. FMCSA has also worked to produce test data assessing variations in heavy duty vehicle stopping distances, and potential impacts on platooning operations.

Question 2. Last Congress, 144 Representatives, and 35 Senators supported a bipartisan bill, the DRIVE-Safe Act, that would address the nationwide driver shortage. The proposed legislation would allow employers to participate in a two-stage apprenticeship program with rigorous training and safety standards for individuals between 18 and 20 years old, eventually expanding the talent pool of commercial drivers.

Despite inaction in Congress last fall, this legislation's popularity led the U.S. Department of Transportation to propose a pilot program that shared several components with the DRIVE-Safe Act. That said, many interested parties still await action on this critical opportunity to address the growing driver shortage.

Mr. Secretary, are you supportive of this crucial pilot program, and when do you expect the Department to take the next step in the rulemaking process?

ANSWER. On December 16, 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration Trucking Action Plan to Strengthen America's Trucking Workforce was released. This plan calls on all levels of government, industry, and labor to come together and build the next generation trucking workforce. Specific immediate actions DOT is taking include providing \$30 million in funding to states to reduce the barriers to obtaining a commercial driver's license, developing a joint DOT-DOL 90-day Trucking Apprenticeship Challenge to expand the use of Registered Apprenticeships, an enhanced focus on veteran recruitment, and the launch of the DOT-DOL Driving Good Jobs initiative to improve the quality of trucking jobs. Since the launch of the Challenge on December 16, 2021, DOL and DOT helped over 130 employers and industry associations develop and launch trucking apprenticeship programs and hire over 680 truck driver apprentices.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has also extended and expanded some Hours of Service waivers for trucks hauling critical freight related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Planning for FMCSA's three-year pilot is underway to determine the feasibility, benefits, and safety impacts of allowing 18–20 year-old military drivers to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) in interstate commerce. During the three-year program, FMCSA will compare safety records of study group participants to existing data on current intrastate and interstate drivers. Comparing performance of current operators to study group participants will help determine if increased training and required use of advanced safety technology can mitigate the safety risks associated with younger drivers. After the program's data is analyzed, the Secretary of Transportation will report to Congress with recommendations for future CDL licensing criteria.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included a provision that incorporates many components of the DRIVE-Safe Act and FMCSA is committed to implementing that program.

Question 3. FHWA recently released guidance regarding the Payroll Protection Program's forgiveness provision and its relationship with the FAR Credits Clause. Illinois DOT has been trying to develop their own policies and procedures in the absence of clear federal direction. It appears from the FHWA guidance that the FAR Credits Clause should only apply to federally funded engineering services contracts. Given this guidance, does it follow that state contracts with no federal funding would then not be subject to the FAR Credits Clause?

ANSWER. The Department worked with small businesses to help them fully utilize their PPP loans while ensuring that contractors are not charging the Federal government for services that were previously paid for by forgiven PPP loans. FHWA worked carefully to provide guidance, which was released on March 24, 2021, that clarifies treatment of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans received by consultants providing architectural and engineering (A&E) services under Federal-aid or Federal lands highway program funded contracts. FHWA's guidance limits the application of the credit on Federal-aid highway program funded contracts to amounts necessary to ensure that the company does not receive a windfall by receiving loan forgiveness from the Small Business Administration and subsequently being reimbursed by FHWA, which would be contrary to governmentwide requirements. FHWA's guidance only applies to Federal-aid or Federal lands highway program funded contracts.

The fundamental issue at hand was ensuring that contractors are not able to "double dip" by receiving forgiven PPP loans while at the same time charging the government for those same services. For this reason, FHWA's guidance limits the amount of credit recovery to only the portion of forgiven loan proceeds which are allocable to the Federal-aid highway program funded contract and nothing more.

FHWA actively participates in regular meetings with representatives of State DOTs, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and other members of the engineering community to address questions or concerns on Federal guidance to ensure consistent implementation.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. STEVE COHEN TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF
TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Emergency Evacuation Testing (SEAT Act): The Seat Egress in Air Travel (SEAT Act) was included in the 2018 FAA Reauthorization bill. It directed the FAA to establish minimum seat size and distance between rows of seats on commercial aircraft to protect the safety of the flying public.

Before the FAA began this testing, I raised several complaints with the previous Administration that their tests were too narrow and did not include a sample that was representative of the flying public. I am under the impression that the FAA did not use: people over the age of 60, individuals under the age of 18, lap children, parents seated separately from their children, individuals with disabilities, service animals, carry-on baggage, individuals with wheelchairs, significantly overweight individuals, individuals whose primary language is not English.

Mr. Secretary, in your opinion, should a study that omitted any and all of these characteristics inform our policies on cabin evacuations and minimum seat sizes?

ANSWER. The FAA tests relied on able-bodied adult subjects under age 60, consistent with regulatory and ethical standards for human testing. Based on CDC classification, almost half of the participants were obese and another 27 percent were overweight. In its March 31, 2022 transmittal of the report to Congress required by Section 337 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, the FAA acknowledged that demographics utilized in its study to address section 577 of the Act were

limited because the study was designed to maximize the ability to identify any differences in egress time due to seat width and pitch. The FAA will seek public comment regarding any additional information that indicates egress time is affected by seat width and pitch, for those demographics not part of the study. And, because evacuation safety encompasses many factors beyond the seats, the FAA is implementing a formal, continuous review process to assess and address evacuation safety, and any issues that arise or are developing in service.

Question 2. Complete Streets:

a. How will your experience working on Complete Streets projects as Mayor influence the DOT's policies under this Administration?

ANSWER. As Mayor and as Secretary, I've seen how important it was to prioritize safety for all users across the transportation system. Complete Streets are roadway designs that accommodate goods movement and multimodal use and are crucial to ensuring our roadways are safe for all Americans to travel, whether by walking, bicycling, rolling, taking public transportation, or driving. Fortunately, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is giving us new tools to ensure safety for everyone.

b. How can the federal transportation program require street designs which promote safety, particularly for vulnerable road users?

ANSWER. To reduce serious injuries and fatalities throughout the Nation, the Department recently released the National Roadway Safety Strategy to outline comprehensive steps to addressing roadway fatalities and serious injuries on our Nation's roads. The Strategy embodies using the "Safe System Approach" to holistically create a system of safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, safe road users, and post-crash care. Roadway environments must be designed to mitigate human mistakes and account for injury tolerances, to encourage safer behaviors, and to facilitate safe travel by the most vulnerable users. This approach does not accept the current high toll of traffic deaths and instead anticipates and accounts for human error and vulnerability to save lives. Safe system initiatives engage all stakeholders and are similar in approach to the airline industry's embrace of safety management systems that resulted in the dramatic decline in air fatalities in the 1990s.

Safety will always remain the number one priority of the Department. It is also important to recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach for America's communities when it comes to safe street design. It is essential that we continue to provide local communities with the technical assistance to implement noteworthy safety practices, while providing the flexibility to adjust to local conditions.

Question 3. Underride Guards: On May 5, 2014, Marianne and Jerry Karth and the Truck Safety Coalition delivered a petition for rulemaking that asked NHTSA to improve the safety of rear underride guards on semitrailers. The Karths and the Truck Safety Coalition also requested rulemaking to prevent side underride and front override truck collisions.

On July 10, 2014, NHTSA granted, in part, a petition and planned on issuing two separate notices—"An advanced notice of proposed rulemaking pertaining to rear impact guards and other strategies for single unit trucks, and a notice of proposed rulemaking on rear impact guards on trailers and semitrailers."

a. How is the Department of Transportation (DOT) responding "within a reasonable timeframe" to the Karth's and the Truck Safety Coalition's petition for rulemaking under the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) to improve side guards and front override guards (79 FR 39362)?

ANSWER. Improving truck safety is an important priority for us. Federal regulations require the back of the trailer to have a guard that meets specific crash-worthiness standards to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries during rear-end crashes. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires the Department to take additional actions on rear underride guards, and the Department is reviewing these requirements and is committed to implementing them consistent with the law. The Department is currently working to finalize a rule to upgrade existing requirements for rear impact guards on newly manufactured trailers and semi-trailers, which is highlighted as a priority action in the DOT National Roadway Safety Strategy.

Additionally, the Department is conducting additional research on underride and side guards. We are also looking at whether anything else should be done to ensure that an underride crash is recorded as such on a police accident report. These efforts will help inform any additional steps, including those regarding underride and side guard performance standards.

b. The Government Accounting Office's report from April 15, 2019 (Truck Underride Guards: Improved Data Collection, Inspections, and Research Needed; GAO-19-264; <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-264>), recommended that

the DOT take steps to provide a standardized definition of underride crashes and data fields; share information with police departments on identifying underride crashes; establish annual inspection requirements for rear guards; and conduct additional research on side underride guard.

The DOT concurred with GAO's recommendations, but does not appear to be actively working on or communicating their efforts with the public. Could you please provide how the DOT is responding to the aforementioned report?

ANSWER. Improving truck safety is an important priority for us. The Department is currently conducting additional research on underride and side guards, and leadership at FMCSA, NHTSA, and OST have been actively engaging with stakeholders on this issue. FMCSA issued a final rule adding rear underride guards as a required item on the list of annual inspections for motor carriers and roadside inspectors. We are also looking at whether anything else should be done to ensure that an underride crash is recorded as such on a police accident report. These efforts will help inform any additional steps, including those regarding underride and side guard performance standards.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. JOHN KATKO TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, I know when you were mayor you focused on the role municipal ID cards could play in helping provide better services for residents in South Bend. As Transportation Secretary, you now oversee another type of ID card—the Commercial Driver's License. I have an interest in an aspect of identity that blends those two together: digital identity—specifically, ways to accelerate the deployment of new mobile Driver's Licenses that can help all Americans have a digital version of their driver's licenses that they can use to prove who they are online, for applications like obtaining government services, opening a new bank account, etc. Have you given any thought to the way that the Department of Transportation might be able to play a role in helping states accelerate the push to digital identity?

ANSWER. The Department supports furthering new and innovative technology in support of our policy goals. While driver licensing is a State responsibility, the Federal Government does play a role through law and regulations in some instances, like REAL ID. I look forward to exploring ideas and finding out if there is an appropriate role for DOT.

Question 2. Despite receiving the same FAA certification as domestic aircraft stations, aircraft stations in other countries are currently allowed to operate without security checks of facilities or personnel, without drug & alcohol testing for safety sensitive personnel, and without random inspections from FAA personnel. Congress has twice directed the FAA to close these gaps and this committee passed a bill last Congress to do so a third time. Can you advise on FAA's plans to close these loopholes and ensure we have one standard for safety and security on airline maintenance?

ANSWER. The FAA's proposed rule is currently under development. I am committed to advancing the proposal and will keep you apprised on the proposed rule's publication.

Question 3. How is the Department of Transportation laying the foundation for the continued development of autonomous vehicle (AV) technology to ensure the future of this technology stays in the United States? There are several countries investing heavily and encouraging innovation and deployment with positive legislation. How is the United States positioned to encourage safe deployment of AVs and remain competitive internationally?

ANSWER. Global competitiveness is one of the priorities of this Administration. The Department is committed to supporting the safe development, testing and deployment of automated vehicle (AV) technology in a way that reflects our priorities and helps ensure that U.S. industry leads the world.

The Department has released multiple guidance documents on important considerations in the design, development and testing of AVs here in the U.S. and has many regulatory tools at its disposal. NHTSA is also reviewing current Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and using its exemption authorities to support safe testing, development, and deployment of AVs. To support safe deployment of AV technologies, the Department is pursuing several regulatory initiatives to advance the deployment of life-saving technologies that are available to consumers today. NHTSA is working on updates to its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) to include modern vehicle safety technologies and informing data-driven solutions through continued implementation of its Standing General Order (SGO) on incident

reporting for vehicles equipped with SAE Level 2 advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) or SAE Levels 3–5 automated driving systems (ADS).

Additionally, NHTSA, on behalf of DOT, represents US interests across the various international discussions on AV technology including under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe’s (UNECE) Global Forum for Roadway Traffic Safety (WP 1) and World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP 29), along with other efforts.

The Department also recently released innovation principles and continues to move forward on standing up and staffing the Highly Automated Systems Safety Center of Excellence, to provide a core expertise to support assessment of automation applications across all modes of transportation, that will help us explore key questions such as labor, safety, and environmental impacts. In addition, the Department invests in the future of transportation through its University Transportation Centers Program, which awards and administers grants to consortia of colleges and universities across the United States. The UTC Program advances the state-of-the-art in transportation research and technology and develops the next generation of transportation professionals.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. JOHN GARAMENDI TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, will you commit to review and modify the Federal Highway Administration’s 1983 nationwide waiver exempting all “manufactured products” from “Buy America” requirements (33 U.S. Code 313)? Congressional intent and federal law are clear: all “manufactured projects” used to construct federally funded transportation projects should be made in America, not just iron, steel, and reinforced pre-cast cement products. However, that has not been the case for nearly 40 years due to this administrative “Buy America” waiver for federally funded highway projects. Mr. Secretary, will you commit to review and modify this 1983 waiver to require that at least some “manufactured products” paid for with taxpayer funds to construct federal highway projects are required to be made in America?

ANSWER. President Biden’s Executive Order on Made in America requires every agency to assess any longstanding or nationwide waivers of Buy America and determine whether those waivers are consistent with the policy set forth in the Order to ensure that we maximize the use of domestic products. Consistent with this requirement, the Department reviewed its existing waivers, including the standing Buy America waiver for manufactured products that was issued by the Federal Highway Administration in 1983. As part of our review, the Department coordinated with the Office of Management and Budget’s Made in America Office. In addition, consistent with Section 70914(d) of the Build America, Buy America Act, DOT will publish a notice in the Federal Register, requesting public comments on the continued need for a general applicability waiver. We will consider those comments as we determine whether to continue, discontinue, or revise the waiver in a manner consistent with President Biden’s Executive Order and the Build America, Buy America Act.

Question 2. Mr. Secretary, will you commit to standardize strong domestic content requirements for “Buy America” across the various agencies/programs within the U.S. Department of Transportation? For example, USDOT agencies have differing—and even contradictory—interpretations for how “Buy America” requirements apply to components/subcomponents, what constitutes “American origin,” or even what “made primarily of steel or iron” means. Some of these contradictions are caused by laws passed by Congress, but many are caused by USDOT agencies themselves. While I appreciate that USDOT agencies have different responsibilities, surely we can expect that USDOT should have more uniform standards across its constituent agencies, if only to create a more economical and readily available supply of Buy America-compliant products for federally funded transportation projects?

ANSWER. Yes, the Department is committed to reviewing the content requirements for “Buy America” across the various agencies/programs within the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Each of our grant-making agencies at DOT has its own Buy America statute, with similar but not identical requirements. We recognize that this can create a challenge at times, particularly for projects that may use more than one source of Federal funding. DOT conducted an internal review of its implementation of Buy America laws, pursuant to the President’s Executive Order. Our review included a consideration of how each DOT agency currently administers Buy America laws, and identified recommendations to improve implementation and enforcement of those requirements across the Department’s programs. We will continue to coordinate with OMB’s Made in America Office to harmonize policies across agencies whenever ap-

appropriate, consistent with the President's goal of maximizing the use of domestic products.

Question 3. I want to bring to your attention an opportunity for your Department and the White House's new "Made in America" Office to strengthen "Buy America" enforcement, administratively without Congress. Many of the "Made in America" laws outlined in President Biden's January 25th Executive Order include "debarment" provisions intended to exclude bad actors from supplying federally funded projects in the future. These debarment authorities are not coordinated across the federal government—or even within the USDOT—and remain underutilized for "Buy America" enforcement. So, will your Department consider creating a single, uniform "debarment" list for all USDOT programs to blacklist suppliers that fraudulently misrepresent or mislabel foreign-sourced products as being American made?

ANSWER. The Department is committed to enforcing Made in America laws at DOT, in keeping with President Biden's vision of ensuring that we maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States. President Biden's Executive Order on Made in America laws reinforces that transparency and accuracy about domestic content is important. Under that Executive Order, the OMB Made in America Office created a centralized website to collect and share information about waivers of such requirements. DOT will continue to coordinate with OMB's Made in America Office to identify ways to increase transparency to government procurement and spending. Additionally, DOT will continue to utilize the government-wide suspension and debarment procedures set forth in 48 CFR Subpart 9.4 and 2 CFR Part 180 as appropriate to ensure that DOT direct contracts and financial assistance are only awarded to responsible sources. A government-wide list of entities found not presently responsible due to suspension or debarment, and accordingly prohibited from receiving federal contracts or financial assistance, is found on the System for Award Management at SAM.gov.

Question 4. Mr. Secretary, Chairman DeFazio and I worked with a bipartisan group of Members to enact the National Timing Reliance and Security Act of 2018 (Section 514 of Public Law 115–282). This law (NTRSA) addresses the complete lack of resiliency for position, navigation, and timing (PNT) services, which are critical to the American infrastructure sector and nearly every citizen. This vulnerability was first detailed by the U.S. Department of Transportation in a 2001 report recommending backup capabilities be deployed to close this gap. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security defined it as "a single point of failure" for critical infrastructure. Since 2001, there have been over 18 studies and recommendations by the federal government calling for a land-based, wireless nationwide backup system.

In 2015, after more than 15 years of studies and recommendations by the federal government, the Obama Administration's PNT Executive Committee—chaired by the then-Deputy Secretaries of Transportation and Defense—sent the notification to Congress acknowledging this significant vulnerability and committed to a two-fold strategy: First, the deployment of a land-based "enhanced long-range navigation" (eLoran) timing system to address this issue immediately; and second, a broader approach to cover all PNT vulnerabilities. This well-reasoned approach gave Congress encouragement that this national security problem would finally be addressed.

However, in 2018, after no additional action was taken, Congress took responsibility to codify the commitments outlined in the 2015 letter, and on a nearly unanimous bipartisan basis in both Houses, passed the NTRSA to implement the land-based timing back up system. The legislation and subsequent law stated that the backup would be up and running by December 2020.

Unfortunately, USDOT has yet to issue the request for proposal and is now more than two years behind in deploying this much-needed capability. In the recently passed Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260) Congress provided funding and report language instructing USDOT to hire six new staff positions to begin implementing the NTRSA.

My question is this: When will the USDOT release a request for proposal to solve this critical vulnerability for our nation's infrastructure and national security?

ANSWER. As part of the FY 2022 President's Budget, DOT proposed a \$17 million investment to support a more resilient civil GPS and to enable more responsible Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT) usage. This request included \$10 million to begin implementation of the recommendations of the Complementary PNT Demonstration Program Report published in 2021 and \$7 million to develop capabilities for GPS interference detection and signal authentication, and support implementation of Executive Order 13905, which provided new requirements for responsible PNT usage.

In addition to the requested resources, the FY 2022 President's Budget proposed the repeal of the National Timing Resilience and Security Act of 2018 (NTRSA), which requires the Secretary of Transportation to "provide for the establishment, sustainment, and operation of a land-based, resilient, and reliable alternative timing system," subject to availability of appropriations. The Administration has viewed the requirements of the NTRSA as overly narrow in the type of back-up system to be provided (land-based), and in defining the Department's role in ensuring a resilient PNT system.

Through the FY 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congress modified the NTRSA to remove the land-based requirement. However, this action does not address the Administration's stated concern that no single solution for the provision of back-up or complementary positioning, navigation and/or timing services can meet the diversity of critical infrastructure requirements. Further, this action does not address the Administration's stated concern that it would be inefficient, anti-competitive, and potentially harmful to the existing market for back-up/complementary PNT services for the Federal Government to procure or otherwise fund a specific solution for non-Federal users.

The FY 2023 President's Budget request continues the request to repeal the NTRSA, and invests an additional \$5 million to continue implementation of EO 13905. DOT's focus is on facilitating adoption of Complementary PNT technologies into end-user applications by developing a similar level of standards, resiliency and vulnerability testing, and performance monitoring as exists for GPS. DOT will convene forums during 2022 to bring PNT service providers and Critical Infrastructure users together to define performance standards in keeping with DOT's civil PNT responsibilities so that users are assured that they will get the backup PNT services they need to operate safely in the absence of GPS by obtaining one of the suite of solutions. DOT also will conduct education and outreach in 2022 through the Transportation Systems Sector Risk Management Agency on the need to incorporate GPS backup/Complementary solutions to mitigate risk to safety-critical applications. DOT will conduct PNT Vulnerability Assessment and Testing in late 2022 into 2023 to stress test and evaluate sources of Complementary PNT sources, and ensure these private sector solutions meet performance commitments for adoption and use in safety-critical transportation applications.

Question 5. Among the many economic consequences of the pandemic has been a major financial hit to domestic airports and related businesses employing countless Americans. This hardship comes at a time when airports face very significant infrastructure needs, in the near and long terms. The country that invented air travel should not have to look to other countries' airports with envy, with the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2021 scorecard giving our nation's airports a D+ grade. Mr. Secretary, how does the need to maintain and improve our nation's airports fit into the Administration's infrastructure priorities?

ANSWER. Airports are a critical component of our nation's infrastructure. In the U.S. alone, approximately 3,300 public-use airports are eligible to receive Federal funds. While the biggest and busiest of our nation's airports move passengers throughout and in and out of the country, we rely on thousands of smaller airports to support aeromedical flights, firefighting, law enforcement, disaster relief, and access to remote communities. Investing in our airports means investing in those communities, the jobs they support, and the vital connections they make to support American business, trade, education, and of course, leisure activities. Nothing unites our nation faster, or more safely, than our air transportation system.

The FAA, primarily through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), is committed to continuously investing in this critical infrastructure sector, and the recently enacted the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will invest \$25 billion to address airport needs.

Question 6. In 2019, a bicameral and bipartisan group of Members of Congress, including myself and Chairman DeFazio, worked to enact the Transportation Infrastructure Vehicle Security Act (Section 7613 of Public Law 116-92). This law (TIVSA) restricts the use of FTA funds to procure rolling stock from foreign state-owned enterprises and foreign state-subsidized manufacturers. However, the FTA has circumvented Congressional intent by misinterpreting TIVSA to grant four U.S. cities (Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia) a permanent administrative exemption. Congressional intent was that transit agencies with existing orders and contracts with CRRC may complete those, not that FTA grant them an ongoing exemption in perpetuity. Will you commit to review and consider modifying these open-ended exemptions?

ANSWER. With the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020, Congress addressed anti-competitive and cybersecurity concerns

identified with respect to Chinese state-owned transit rolling stock manufacturers by limiting the use of Federal dollars by transit agencies in procuring railcars and buses. Congress also created phase-in periods and exceptions to these limitations, which the Executive Branch must respect. DOT continues to adhere to the exemption granted by TIVSA to the four transit agencies that had entered into contracts with the China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC) before December 20, 2019. DOT is implementing the statutory language.

Specifically, Congress provided a permanent exception from the general prohibition of 49 U.S.C. § 5323(u) for agencies that executed a contract for rail rolling stock with an otherwise restricted manufacturer prior to December 20, 2019. As a result, the general prohibition covering restricted transit vehicle manufacturers (such as CRRC) does not apply to the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), all of which executed contracts with a restricted railcar manufacturer before the date of enactment of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2020.

Since enactment of TIVSA, DOT has advised inquiring members of Congress that a statutory amendment would be necessary to remove this exemption. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law amended 49 U.S.C. § 5323(u) to create a new exemption regarding the transit vehicle manufacturers that are covered by its restrictions but did not amend this permanent exception.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. DOUG LAMALFA TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Railroads pay for their own infrastructure and are the most energy efficient form of land transportation. Given the recent news of a proposed rail merger between the Canadian Pacific (CP) and Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroads, what would prevent you from supporting a merger that would lead to increasing the amount of freight that moves on the railroad?

ANSWER. The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is responsible for approving the proposed merger. FRA uses its Safety Integration Plan (SIP) regulation (49 CFR Part 244) to ensure the railroads involved take appropriate action to safely integrate their operations. That regulation requires Class I railroads seeking STB approval to amalgamate (i.e., combine) operations to develop and implement a SIP to address the safety of railroad operations during every phase of the proposed amalgamation. In accordance with Part 244, FRA will advise STB as to whether the railroads' SIP provides a reasonable assurance of safety for the transaction. On December 28, 2021, CP and KCS submitted their safety integration plan to FRA, and the plan is currently under review.

Question 2. In recent years, there have been efforts to mandate the use of speed limiters in heavy trucks, but these efforts have repeatedly failed in Congress. Can you ensure that the Department of Transportation does not move ahead on its own with a speed limiter mandate?

ANSWER. Safety is our top priority at DOT and we must use all possible tools to ensure the safety of the traveling public, including on our roadways, where we are currently seeing a crisis of increasing deaths, including a 13 percent estimated increase from 2020 to 2021 in fatalities involving a large truck. Throughout the course of the pandemic, we have also seen higher speeds causing significantly more loss of life.

In April of 2022, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration announced its intent to do a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking to revisit the speed limiter rulemaking. This will allow stakeholders, Congress, and the general public to provide valuable input during the notice and comment period in order to inform the Department's actions.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR. TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Historically, the federal government has been a strong funding partner to state and local governments on roadway projects. The same funding has not been equally available for transit projects. This has exacerbated transit inequity, particularly in lower-income communities, often communities of color, that may not have access to a car and rely on their public transit system.

a. What specific plans does the Administration have to remedy transit inequity?

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides the largest investment in public transportation in the nation's history.

President Biden's commitment to equity includes building a transportation system that works for all Americans. That means ensuring that in discretionary grant programs, all communities, especially those that have historically been left behind or suffered from underinvestment, have a fair shot. For example, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the availability of approximately \$10 million in competitive grant funds through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for FTA's Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. The funds will support comprehensive planning efforts that help connect communities, improve access to public transportation and affordable housing, and support President Biden's call to combat climate change, advance environmental justice, and promote equitable delivery of benefits to underserved communities.

a.i. What are the economic advantages public transit provides for lower-income communities?

ANSWER. Good public transit options provide lower-income communities with access—access not only to jobs, but also healthcare, education, food, entertainment, and all aspects of a thriving community. Such investments will also mitigate socioeconomic disparities, advance racial equity, and promote affordable access to opportunity.

Investment in transit will ultimately reduce commute times and traffic congestion for everyone, while developing sustainable communities across the nation. We have the responsibility to ensure that all Americans have equitable access to safe, affordable, and smart transportation options.

b. Are any considerations being made to increase the federal cost share for transit projects, like improving the Capital Investments Grants (CIG) Program?

ANSWER. On February 16, 2021, FTA rescinded the "Dear Colleague" letter on the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program issued by FTA on June 29, 2018. The policy had previously prohibited states and local entities from using federal loans as part of their local funding match when applying for grants. The Biden-Harris Administration will rely on the CIG statutory framework to ensure projects awarded funding have met the requirements of federal public transportation law, the Major Capital Investment Projects Final Rule, and the CIG Final Interim Policy Guidance.

DOT continues to proactively identify ways to improve the CIG Program. In July, FTA released a Request for Information seeking suggestions from all transit stakeholders (e.g., transit authorities, planning officials, States, cities, the private sector, and the public) on improvements that could be made to the evaluation process for projects seeking funding from the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program. Specifically, FTA seeks input on evaluation measures and data sources that can better capture the benefits and costs of transit and how the CIG program can facilitate outcomes that maximize those benefits. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides significant funding for public transit, including for the CIG program.

Question 2. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) are becoming more popular with consumers and auto manufacturers seeking improved safety features. Minimum performance standards for these safety features are an essential component to developing safer advanced driving systems. This allows those systems to better detect other vehicles, hazards, and inform consumers on proper use and management.

Last year, H.R. 2 included language that required all new passenger motor vehicles to be equipped with ADAS and required specific minimum performance standards for components of those systems.

Does the Department intend to establish minimum ADAS standards and standardized ADAS terms?

ANSWER. ADAS technologies are becoming prevalent in vehicles on our roadways. The Department is committed to improving safety and reducing the number of deaths and injuries on our roadways. The Department is researching ADAS technologies to determine their overall effectiveness to reduce crashes and injuries. In addition, the Department will continue to work with industry stakeholders on common ADAS terminologies and definitions. The Department is also considering addressing consumer education on ADAS technologies through revisions to the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires NHTSA to take numerous additional actions on safety including on automated emergency braking, advanced drunk driving prevention, and crash avoidance technology. NHTSA is committed to implementing these requirements and authorities consistent with the law.

Question 3. If we are to really meet the moment of this climate crisis, electrification of our transit network must be central to our goals. While many transit agen-

cies across the country are planning and taking action to transition to zero-emission bus fleets, many are behind in their development.

- a. What is your message to those agencies that aren't as far ahead, or have not been proactive in making the transition to electrification?

ANSWER. While public transit buses provide an energy efficient alternative to single occupancy vehicles, approximately 70 percent of buses currently in service are still using conventional diesel or diesel hybrid power. FTA's Low or No Emissions competitive grant program provides funding to support the transition to low and no emission vehicles, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$5.6 billion over five years. In addition, low and no emission vehicles are an eligible expense under FTA's Buses and Bus Facilities formula and competitive programs. It should be noted that there are billions of dollars available annually in FTA's formula funding programs that could be spent on eligible activities that support the transition to electrification. FTA will continue to provide guidance and technical assistance to support transit agencies as they transition their fleets.

- b. How can this Committee, in collaboration with DOT, further enable and incentivize transit agencies to work on planning, preparing, modernizing facilities, and transitioning to zero emission buses sooner?

ANSWER. FTA's Low or No Emissions competitive grant program provides funding for low or no emissions bus projects that reduce energy consumption and harmful emissions. However, demand for the program far outpaces the amount of funding available. That is why the Administration looks forward to implementing provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which includes funds to replace diesel transit vehicles with zero and low emission fleets.

- c. Do you believe consumers are incentivized to purchase electric vehicles (EV)?
- i. In your view, are there ways we can expand consumer incentives to purchase an EV?
- ii. Further, how we can ensure that the ability to purchase an EV is not restricted by class/socioeconomic limitations?

ANSWER to c., c.i., & c.ii. We have the chance to transform our transportation sector into a 21st century system that makes transportation options more affordable and reliable for all Americans, creates more communities of opportunity, accelerates equitable economic growth, and increases global competitiveness. We want to rebuild our infrastructure in a way that not only is more resilient but helps fight climate change. The auto industry is also demonstrating their commitment to a voluntary shift to EV manufacturing and are in the process of rolling out new hybrid and EV models ranging from sub-compacts to pick-up trucks that are aimed at meeting a wide variety of financial, performance, and aesthetic needs.

Developments in battery and charging technology, the auto industry's release of a wider range of increasingly affordable EVs, and additional support from the Administration for the EV domestic supply chain are also expected to contribute to a decrease in the upfront purchase costs of EVs. According to a study by Consumer Reports, EV drivers can save thousands of dollars over the life of the vehicle thanks to reduced fuel and maintenance costs. The Administration has also advocated for tax incentives that would further reduce the upfront cost of EVs.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. MIKE GALLAGHER TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Secretary Buttigieg, in your testimony, you highlight the importance of investing in our maritime ports.

- a. Coming from a Great Lakes state, would you agree that our Great Lakes ports play a critical role in our economy, not just in the Midwest but nationwide?

ANSWER. Yes, both maritime commerce and ports on the Great Lakes are critical components of the economy of the United States. The 2018 study *Economic Impacts of Maritime Shipping in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region* estimated that more than 140 million metric tons of cargo, valued at \$15 billion, is moved on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System every year. According to the Lake Carriers Association, the U.S.-flag fleet accounts for about 90 million tons of those cargoes. This maritime trade sustains over 145,000 U.S. jobs and \$10.5 billion in salaries with a total economic impact of \$35 billion.

- b. Given their importance to our nation's economy, would you agree that it's essential to support these ports year-round, including through the Coast Guard's critical ice breaking mission?

ANSWER. Our Great Lakes ports are a critical component of the United States economy, and their ability to remain open for navigation is essential. The U.S. Coast Guard, which is under the Department of Homeland Security, is required to provide

icebreaking capability on the Great Lakes to keep our ports, channels, and harbors open to navigation during the winter months. The U.S. Coast Guard is critical in ensuring our nation's commerce continues to flow on the Great Lakes and support America's economy. DOT works closely with the Coast Guard to achieve our shared missions.

- c. The Coast Guard's icebreaking mission was established via executive order 85 years ago. Given how much has changed across our economy since then, what benefits would you see in taking a look at federal icebreaking standards and ensuring they are best meeting the nation's economic needs?

ANSWER. It is my understanding that the U.S. Coast Guard, which is under the Department of Homeland Security, periodically evaluates its domestic icebreaking policies to address changes in factors that influence their mission. As our nation's waterborne commerce continues to expand, new changes in policy may be needed, and I am confident that our men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard will continue to meet future mission needs.

Question 2. The Wall Street Journal recently reported [<https://www.wsj.com/articles/americans-drove-fewer-miles-in-2020-pedestrians-were-any-safer-11616472061>] that pedestrian deaths related to car accidents were up 20% in 2020, despite the 16% drop in miles driven. That follows the Journal's headline from last year: *More American Pedestrians Are Dying Than in the Past 30 Years* [<https://www.wsj.com/articles/more-american-pedestrians-are-dying-than-in-past-30-years-11582779660>]. Just two days before this hearing, AAA issued a report [<https://fox11online.com/news/local/wisconsin-sees-significant-increase-in-wrong-way-fatal-crashes-according-to-aaa>] citing, in my home state of Wisconsin, a 230% increase in fatal wrong way driving crashes over recent years, giving us the third highest rate in the nation. This trend should be going in the opposite direction, considering the advances we've made in auto safety technology. But we have credible evidence that distracted driving is on the rise, injuring and at times killing so many Americans. I've introduced legislation—the SAFE TO DRIVE Act—that will allow states to enact their own solutions to prevent distracted driving. I think the Department of Transportation can be an active supporter of those efforts.

- a. What is your plan to address the spike in distracted driving? How does the SAFE TO DRIVE Act (H.R. 762) fit into your strategy?

ANSWER. Safety remains the number one priority of the Department. We are facing a crisis on our nation's roadways, with Americans increasingly losing their lives and sustaining life-changing injuries in preventable crashes. NHTSA projects that an estimated 42,915 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2021, a 10.5 percent increase from the 38,824 fatalities in 2020. Specifically, pedestrian deaths are estimated to rise 13 percent. To address this crisis, the Department recently released its National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS), which uses a "Safe System Approach" to help ensure safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, and safe road users. The NRSS provides concrete steps that the Department will take to address this crisis systemically and prevent these tragic and avoidable deaths and serious injuries.

As we expand and modernize a world-class transportation system, our rules, regulations, and programs that ensure everyone's safety must keep pace. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is a leader in addressing distracted driving by educating Americans about its dangers and partnering with the states and other stakeholders against distracted driving that help keep us safe. In May, NHTSA released \$740 million in grant funding for the 402 State and Community Grant Program, which focuses on reducing risky behavior, and Section 405 National Priority Safety Program, which aims to address an array of national priorities for reducing roadway deaths. In an effort to reduce traffic accidents resulting in deaths, injuries, and property damage, states are encouraged to use these federal funds under various program areas including combatting unsafe driving behavior. In addition, states are encouraged to address safety concerns among vulnerable road users and overrepresented populations. NHTSA's campaigns and public service announcements make the case to Americans that safe driving means driving without distractions. The foundation of NHTSA's efforts on distracted driving and other risky driving behaviors is our partnership with the states and other partners. The states determine laws affecting distracted driving, but NHTSA provides federal investments in the locally driven strategies that address the states' specific needs. One of the highlights of this relationship comes during April's Distracted Driving Awareness Month, which pairs a national advertising campaign with law enforcement called U Drive. U Text. U Pay.

Additionally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires NHTSA to conduct research to address driver distraction and initiate rulemaking in accordance with 49

USC 30111. NHTSA is committed to implementing these requirements consistent with the law.

- b. There are many challenges facing law enforcement and Wisconsin communities when it comes to drug-driving—a lack of reliable roadside tests and a uniform standard to measure inebriation. How specifically will you address this issue to keep our roadways safe?

ANSWER. The Department is committed to improving safety and reducing the number of deaths and injuries on our roadways. In addition to conducting foundational research to understand the effects of drugs on driving, NHTSA supports training, education, best practices, and countermeasures to address drug-impaired driving, including training for prosecutors and education and information to judges. NHTSA has developed a Drug-Impaired Driving Criminal Justice Evaluation Tool designed to allow agencies to assess the strength of their drug-impaired driving programs. NHTSA also leads efforts to educate Americans about the many substances that can impair driving, including alcohol, some over-the-counter and prescription drugs and illegal drugs. NHTSA is raising awareness of the dangers of drug-impaired driving through national campaigns: If You Feel Different, You Drive Different; Drive High, Get a DUI; and There is More Than One Way to be Under the Influence.

- c. How can the members of this Committee and Congress work with the Administration to reverse this terrible trend of pedestrian deaths due to distracted driving?

ANSWER. These trends are deeply concerning—and we must reverse them. Indications show that behavioral safety issues are playing a role in the increase in fatalities. Distraction is one such behavioral issue, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will continue to invest in activities that prevent distracted driving through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs, such as the National Priority Safety Programs (Section 405 funding) and associated grants for States with distracted driving laws, as well as Congressionally directed research on motor vehicle monitoring systems to minimize or eliminate distraction and driver disengagement. Distraction and the safety of people walking, biking, and using personal conveyance or micromobility will be a consideration as we implement those programs. Safety is the Department's top priority, and we appreciate the resources provided by the Committee to help DOT take steps to reverse these trends and help prevent roadway deaths.

Question 3. Secretary Buttigieg, you stated in your testimony that the transportation sector is the leading contributor to climate change in the United States, and your Department will have a key role in advancing our nation's climate policy. As companies look to reduce their carbon footprint in transportation and logistics, there are proposals that, if implemented today, would have a significant impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The 2016 U.S. Department of Transportation Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limit Study found that shifting to a six axle, 91,000-pound truck configuration would result in a 2.4-billion-pound reduction in annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, a \$358-million reduction in annual congestion costs, and a 1.2 billion-mile reduction in annual vehicle miles traveled on U.S. road.

A provision in the CARES Act allowed states to issue permits allowing trucks to operate above federal weight limits on Interstates during the COVID-19 crisis to provide much needed supplies to families and communities. Companies across the US were able to take advantage of this provision and found a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions with no increased safety risk when they were able to fill trucks to a higher capacity. One company found that during the limited time frame they were allowed to operate heavier trucks that they saved 2.78 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and saved 272 gallons of diesel. If they were able to implement this across the company's use of tractor-semitrailers, they would save 16% of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, which is akin to taking 8,279 cars off the road for a year.

This would be the case across the industry if a responsible pilot program to increase gross vehicle weights on interstate highways in a limited number of states was implemented.

- a. Should the federal government support pilot programs, like the one mentioned above, that provide the transportation sector with the opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, collect data, reduce road wear and tear, increase efficiency in the supply chain, and decrease the chance of crashes on interstate highways?

- b. Would the Biden Administration support enactment of a limited pilot program to increase gross vehicle weight limits that has been proven to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with no increased safety risk?

ANSWER to a. & b. Truck size and weight is controlled by Federal statute. States must ensure that commercial motor vehicles comply with Federal size and weight requirements. FHWA is responsible for ensuring State compliance with such requirements, as well as related requirements, like bridge and tunnel safety. The Department stands ready to provide technical assistance for any changes that Congress proposes in this area.

Question 4. According to the DOT Working Group on Small Community Air Service [<https://ci.pierre.sd.us/DocumentCenter/View/1679/DOT-Working-Group-on-Small-Community-Air-Service-Report?bidId=>], between 2007 and 2016, more than 50 airports lost scheduled air service altogether due to the effects of the Great Recession. Additionally, non-hub and small-hub airports saw departures reduced by a factor five times worse than reductions at large hub airports, with smaller communities losing more than 31% of their scheduled departures. Today, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, demand for air travel, and on the airline industry is much greater than the Great Recession, and we find ourselves once again in a situation that could have irrevocable consequences for small community air service throughout the country.

Approximately 170 communities in rural areas in 36 states and territories throughout the country rely on the Essential Air Service Program to ensure that their communities remain connected to the air transportation system and aren't at risk for complete air service loss. According to a 2017 study, passenger service at these EAS airports carried an economic impact of \$2 billion, which will be essential as these communities rebuild their economies from the pandemic.

Unfortunately, many communities facing a total risk of air loss service will not be able to rely on the EAS program as an important safety net, since only communities that participated in the program in 2012 are eligible for the program, today.

Is the Department willing to work with Congress to allow additional communities to temporarily enter the EAS program or provide some other form of assistance through the Small Community Air Service Development Program to prevent a complete loss of air service in order to assist them with their economic recovery from the pandemic?

ANSWER. DOT is committed to keeping small communities connected to vital air transportation services that foster economic opportunity and help meet critical needs. The Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP) and Essential Air Service (EAS) are two tools that allow us to provide direct assistance in support of aviation recovery; however, these programs work very differently.

SCASDP is a discretionary grant program, and as such, requires communities to submit applications that are evaluated in a competitive grant process based on established criteria, and the program is intended to provide limited assistance with self-sustaining service as an end goal.

EAS provides ongoing direct subsidy to EAS-eligible communities where commercially sustainable service is unlikely. EAS communities receive funding based solely on eligibility. Communities do not compete for funding. New communities are not allowed in the program, except for Alaska and Hawaii, which have special eligibility allowances under 49 U.S.C. § 41731.

Yes, the Department is willing to work with Congress through both programs to help more communities either achieve sustainable service under SCASDP, or, if 49 U.S.C. §41731 is amended, temporarily enter the EAS program to obtain subsidized service. The Department stands ready to help refine these goals through technical assistance and help ensure they can be achieved under the most appropriate means.

Question 5. As air travel rebounds, multiple studies indicate that the existing pilot shortage will be exacerbated. In early 2020, about half of all U.S. qualified pilots faced mandatory retirement within 15 years, and the COVID-19 pandemic drove early exits that have been estimated at about 10%. At the same time, fewer pilots are entering the pipeline. According to the FAA's pilot airmen data, 2021 is on pace to produce 66% fewer new ATP AMEL airmen. This represents an eight-year low.

The higher cost of flight training has been identified by GAO as a chief impediment to increasing enrollment at flight training programs especially at colleges and universities where flight training fees add \$50,000 or more to the cost of attendance, including tuition, which is well above the cap for federal financial aid.

- a. Given the need to expand the pilot workforce, does the Department anticipate pursuing any initiatives for attracting a new generation of qualified and skilled professionals?

ANSWER. The domestic aviation industry is experiencing a significant pilot shortage, which is disproportionately affecting smaller, regional carriers, and is expected to intensify in the near-term and continue for a period of many months. Safety is still paramount to DOT and the aviation industry. As we seek solutions and means to make piloting careers appeal to more people, that must include a more diverse array of people.

There is no quick fix to the current labor market challenges, which are the result of multiple factors. The pandemic intensified the preexisting difficulties regarding pilot recruitment and retention. Early retirement programs and voluntary departures aimed at reducing long-term costs thinned airline staff.

DOT is working to support the aviation industry efforts with the following actions to return piloting to a premier profession:

- The FAA will shortly release a second Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Aircraft Pilots Workforce Development Grants Program that will help foster aviation interest in high school age children with curriculum and experiences that should be designed to get them started toward careers in aviation.
 - The FAA's regions have each adopted a school to foster an early interest in aviation and expand STEM education.
- b. Would your department support working with the Department of Education, Labor, or Commerce to increase financial resources to help more aspiring pilots access flight training?

ANSWER. Yes, DOT has had coordinated, exploratory conversations with the Departments of Education and Labor to explore ways in which the federal government could work with the airline industry and training schools to develop talent pipelines that start with recruitment of diverse training candidates and includes better use of mentoring to help with high washout rates of flight training, covering costs of flight training in addition to education, and giving retirees with vital flight knowledge ways to contribute beyond age 65 by helping develop the next generation of pilots. DOT stands ready to help with technical assistance on these ideas in order to meet Congress' desire to address these challenges.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. ANDRÉ CARSON TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. I'm very concerned about threats to transit funding, especially in our home state of Indiana. Transit funding for green projects like the Bus Rapid Transit System, including the Red Line, have been the subject of state bills to cut the state matches, which I believe are overly prescriptive and punitive. This is disappointing because the project grew out of bipartisan cooperation between the former Republican Mayor of Indianapolis, and another former mayor and for Secretary Anthony Foxx. Their bipartisan work resulted in budget support from the White House and authorization and appropriations from Congress. This threat to transit funding is not unique to Indiana and I'd like to get your insights about the best way to defeat these short-sighted efforts.

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides the largest investment in public transportation in the nation's history. In total, the new investments and reauthorization in the BIL provide \$91.2 billion in guaranteed funding for public transit over the next five years. The legislation will expand public transit options across every state in the country; replace thousands of deficient transit vehicles, including buses, with clean, zero emission vehicles; and improve accessibility for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Question 2. Secretary Buttigieg, we have heard the President outline a desire to create millions of new jobs in manufacturing and other sectors due to the Administration's focus on Climate Change and the desire to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What estimate is the Administration relying upon to calculate these millions of new jobs due to the fact that we'll likely experience a significant job loss when it comes to highly skilled workers currently employed at engine and transmission plants?

ANSWER. Addressing climate change will create high-quality jobs throughout our economy. The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to supporting a market-based shift to clean energy sources to power our economy, which will create jobs needed to manufacture and install renewable energy equipment, for example. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will also create jobs by domestically investing Federal funding in and supporting the EV manufacturing supply chain. Supporting and enabling the shift to electric vehicles will help to create jobs throughout the larger domestic electrical vehicle supply chain—from retrofitting vehicle manufacturing plants to the production of EV batteries. The Biden-Harris Administration is com-

mitted to ensuring that these exciting opportunities in a clean energy economy are shared by all Americans.

Question 3. Additionally, the average cost of a new vehicle sold today is roughly \$40,000—and battery electric, plug-in hybrid, or fuel cell vehicles cost roughly \$10,000 or more than a conventional vehicle. When do you believe that my constituents and the American public will see price parity between the purchase price of an Electrified vehicle and conventional vehicle?

ANSWER. We have the chance to transform our transportation sector into a 21st century system that makes transportation options more affordable and reliable for all Americans, creates more communities of opportunity, accelerates equitable economic growth, and increases global competitiveness. The auto industry is demonstrating its commitment to a voluntary shift to EV manufacturing and are in the process of rolling out new hybrid and EV models ranging from sub-compacts to pickup trucks that are aimed at meeting a wide variety of financial, performance, and aesthetic needs.

Developments in battery and charging technology, the auto industry's release of a wider range of increasingly affordable EVs, and additional support from the Administration for the EV domestic supply chain are also expected to contribute to a decrease in the upfront purchase costs of EVs. According to a study by Consumer Reports, EV drivers can save thousands of dollars over the life of the vehicle thanks to reduced fuel and maintenance costs. Fuel cell vehicles are expected to follow a similar trajectory, particularly the mid- to heavy-duty vehicles, with current investments in hydrogen technology development, supply chains, and infrastructure. The Administration has also advocated for tax incentives that would further reduce the upfront cost of EVs.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. TIM BURCHETT TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) are becoming more popular with consumers and auto manufacturers seeking improved safety features. What current and future resources are available to the Department to establish minimum ADAS standards? Does the Department intend to establish minimum standards or standardize terms?

ANSWER. The Department is committed to improving safety and reducing the number of deaths and injuries on our roadways. This Administration believes that data should inform decisions. The Department is researching ADAS technologies to determine their overall effectiveness to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities. After this research is completed, we will use the data to define next steps, which may include harmonizing test procedures with other countries and/or consumer information programs, regulations, and/or incorporation into NCAP. To inform data-driven solutions, NHTSA will continue implementing its Standing General Order (SGO) on incident reporting for vehicles equipped with SAE Level 2 advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) or SAE Levels 3–5 automated driving systems (ADS). NHTSA released the SGO data on its website on June 15, 2022, and anticipates updating the data on a monthly basis.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires NHTSA to take numerous additional actions on safety including on automated emergency braking, advanced drunk driving prevention, crash avoidance technology, and NCAP. NHTSA is reviewing these requirements and authorities and is committed to implementing them consistent with the law.

Question 2. As a former mayor, I worked to limit unnecessary spending and promote competition by contracting with the private sector, rather than establishing duplicative services within the government. Often, services such as intra-city bus services, engineering, construction, surveying and mapping are carried out by governments as well as private firms. Do you believe that, in many cases, the private sector is better equipped to execute a project than the federal government alone? How will you work to contract out, privatize, or review the cost and quality of government versus private sector performance?

ANSWER. I consider it important to engage the private sector and make use of all appropriate tools to ensure that DOT is providing the most efficient and effective programs on behalf of the American people.

Question 3. Secretary, you have previously outlined the President's desire to add 500,000 Electric Vehicle charging points over the next 10 years. Is the U.S. DOT involved in this effort? If not, which agency has overall responsibility for this effort? Would these be public DC fast chargers or Level 2? How many battery EVs would

that support? How will the private sector be engaged to prevent unfair competition from government or public utilities?

ANSWER. DOT is working with the U.S. Department of Energy and other Federal agencies to deliver on President Biden’s infrastructure priorities. Through a combination of programs, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is supporting a transformational acceleration in the deployment of a mix of chargers in apartment buildings, in public parking, throughout communities, and robust fast charging along our nation’s roadways. The type of electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) would vary depending on the installation location and its core users.

DOT and DOE have stood up a Joint Office of Energy and Transportation to provide technical assistance for the deployment of \$7.5 billion from BIL to build out a national EV charging network. DOT released guidance to provide states with additional information on the deployment of the BIL-created \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula (NEVI) Program, including guidance on recommended charging capacity for charging stations. On June 9, 2022, as directed in BIL, FHWA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that sets minimum standards and requirements for EV charging infrastructure funded through the NEVI program. Alongside the NPRM, FHWA released a set of FAQs to help states draft their EV charging plans, which are due on August 1, 2022. These FAQs cover a broad range of topics, including eligible costs, equity, workforce, and more. In addition, on June 8, 2022, DOT and DOE established an EV Working Group in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and put out a request for nominations.

Question 4. Understanding that the U.S. DOT and the Environmental Protection Agency are reviewing the Trump Administration’s previously finalized auto standards for Model Years 2021–2026, can you share DOT’s timeline for when any modifications will be proposed or finalized and how will coordination between EPA and DOT be assured? Do you think the average cost of a new vehicle purchase will increase or decrease compared to prices today? How is DOT/NHTSA viewing the balance between vehicle fuel economy improvements, safety, affordability, and new technologies?

ANSWER. In the January 20, 2021, Executive Order, President Biden directed NHTSA to review the 2020 “The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule for Model Years 2021–2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks” final rule. The President further declared the Biden-Harris Administration’s policy to improve public health and protect our environment, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to bolster resilience to the impacts of climate change, and to prioritize both environmental justice and the creation of the well-paying union jobs necessary to deliver on these goals. In August 2021, DOT proposed new CAFE standards for Model Years 2024–2026, and DOT then coordinated with all appropriate parties to finalize this rule. Updates are also available at [NHTSA.gov/fuel-economy](https://www.nhtsa.gov/fuel-economy).

While it is difficult to forecast the average cost of a new vehicle, given a variety of factors that impact price, NHTSA’s final rule estimates that drivers will save close to \$100 billion in fuel savings for new vehicles sold by 2030.

We also have the chance to transform our transportation sector into a 21st century system that creates more communities of opportunity, accelerates equitable economic growth, and increases global competitiveness. We’re already seeing many automakers promoting exciting new zero emission vehicles with longer ranges, excellent performance, and all-wheel drive. That means using whatever tools we have at our disposal to support clean transportation, whether that’s strengthening our fuel economy standards, delivering on the President’s promise to build 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations, or supporting American innovation. I am also committed to ensuring that we deliver the benefits of a clean transportation fleet to all communities, especially those that have borne a disproportionate burden of exposure to air pollution from cars and trucks.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. JARED HUFFMAN TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Active modes of transportation offer tools to help address the nexus of climate change and transportation by reducing emissions. How does the Department plan to prioritize bikes and active transportation across programs to support lower emissions?

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) includes funding to improve road safety for all users, including increases to existing safety programs and a new Safe Streets and Roads for All program to reduce crashes and fatalities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.

Further, the plan focuses on restoring and modernizing our infrastructure—transforming it to make it safer, more resilient to climate, and more equitable for all

modes of transportation including pedestrians, bicyclists, and other micro mobility modes.

Question 2. Many communities already have barriers to accessing bikes as a mode of transportation because they lack high quality, connected, and safe infrastructure. How will you prioritize communities in the most need of choice and safety?

ANSWER. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, roads have become a place for much more than cars—restaurants, pedestrian walkways—and we must adapt our safety systems accordingly. We’re talking not only about automobile users, but also those who use public transportation or travel by bike or foot in our communities. The BIL also includes funding for a new program that will reconnect neighborhoods cut off by historic investments and ensure new projects increase opportunity, advance racial equity and environmental justice, and promote affordable access.

Question 3. Electric bicycles continue to be the largest growth sector of the bicycle market and are increasingly being used to replace car trips. As we consider broad-scale vehicle electrification, what role do you see e-bikes playing in making our transportation systems more resilient?

ANSWER. Electric bikes (e-bikes) have the potential to help reduce emissions by taking more cars off the road, but they must be safe in order to be viable. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, roads have become a place for much more than cars, and we must adapt our safety systems accordingly. And we are talking not only about in terms of automobile users, but also those who use public transportation or travel by bike, including electric bikes (e-bikes), or on foot in our communities. We are committed to creating safe networks, and we work actively with Federal-aid recipients to help them identify areas in their community that lack a complete network for pedestrian or bicycle transportation.

Question 4. In your February 25 joint statement with Transport Canada on the nexus between transportation and climate change, you stated, “We intend to advance the development and deployment of high integrity sustainable aviation fuels.” The development of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) has made great strides, and the big hurdle now for SAF is producing SAF in quantities that will have a significant impact in reducing carbon levels in the hard to decarbonize aviation sector. SAF is the most cost effective and reliable option for decarbonizing aviation. Fred Smith, the Chairman of Fed Ex, in testimony last week, indicated current efforts to replace carbon-based jet fuels are limited because of costs associated with sustainable aircraft fuels.

Do you believe federal government incentives like a SAF blender’s tax credit (BTC) is a solution to scale up the industry?

Question 5. Would the blenders tax credit proposal of \$1.50/gal. for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) that achieve a 50% reduction in GHG, bring the cost of SAF close to parity with regular jet fuel?

ANSWER to 4 & 5. Sustainable aviation fuels offer the best ongoing opportunity to reduce emissions from the aviation sector, given the limitations and energy density of battery technology today for aviation uses. Adequately addressing the cost disparity of the renewable fuels market and the existing fossil fuel supply of aviation fuel will be critical to achieving wide-spread production and deployment, spurring job creation in agriculture, refining, construction and logistics throughout the nation, and to meeting U.S. aviation climate commitments, including those made at the International Civil Aviation Organization and the Paris Agreement. In September 2021, several Federal agencies, including DOT, DOE and USDA, came together to support the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Grand Challenge, and this collaboration will jointly leverage existing authorities and resources to promote sustainable fuel production.

Question 6. On August 16, 2016, the EPA determined that greenhouse gases from aircraft engines endangered public health and welfare. 42 USC Section 44714 creates a non-discretionary duty for FAA to prescribe fuel standards to control or eliminate emissions from any pollutant for which EPA has made an endangerment finding under Section 231 of the Clean Air Act. Has FAA examined this statutory duty to create a fuel standard to control aircraft greenhouse gas emissions?

ANSWER. The FAA has examined its responsibilities under the statutory requirements and intends to implement them. For example, this may include changes to aircraft certification regulations.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. MICHAEL GUEST TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF
TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. The Department of Transportation released a Congressionally-authorized study focusing on insurance requirements for commercial motor vehicle operators. The study found that damages in over 99% of crashes involving large trucks were covered by the current \$750,000 minimum insurance requirement for motor carriers.

Despite this, and that the lack of reputable research indicating any increase would improve highway safety, some Members of Congress are proposing raising the minimum to anywhere from \$2,000,000 to nearly \$5,000,000.

Truckers, farmers, and manufacturers have warned us such an increase is not only unnecessary but would also have a devastating impact on their operations and force many small operators, 96% of registered motor carriers, out of business entirely.

If efforts to legislate this harmful and controversial policy fail, can you ensure DOT will not circumvent Congress and mandate an insurance increase through the regulatory process, given the absence of data indicating it is needed or would improve safety?

ANSWER. In 2017, DOT withdrew its rulemaking related to insurance minimums for motor carriers due to a lack of appropriate data. Currently, FMCSA is not able to provide a broader assessment of the appropriateness of the motor carrier financial responsibility requirements.

Question 2. There is a great deal of attention in public discourse about the coming wave of battery electric vehicles. I know there is a strong push from some House Members for a “green new deal” in which internal combustion engines are quickly replaced by battery powered motors. As we consider the funding needs of our nation’s transportation system, I am concerned that the hope of an all-battery fleet outweighs the reality of the situation.

Americans typically keep their vehicles for an average of 12 years, and some keep their cars and trucks much longer. It takes 6–7 years for an automaker to design, build, and sell a new vehicle. So that means that even if every car maker decided to shift all of their production to battery-powered cars and trucks, it would be at least 20–25 years before we could conceivably see this “green new future” ... and that’s a best case.

Do those numbers seem correct to you, and are you factoring them into your infrastructure planning?

ANSWER. The Administration supports accelerating the conversion of our transportation system towards zero emissions. As you note, there will continue to be gas-powered vehicles on the road for many more years, and that’s why the Department, working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency, announced in April 2022 new Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards of approximately 49 mpg for passenger cars and light trucks by model year 2026.

The auto industry is also demonstrating its commitment to a voluntary shift to EV manufacturing and is in the process of rolling out new hybrid and EV models ranging from sub-compacts to pick-up trucks that are aimed at meeting a wide variety of financial, performance, and aesthetic needs.

The Administration will support automakers in spurring domestic supply chains from raw materials to parts, retooling factories to compete globally, and transitioning American workers to make batteries and EVs. With the right combination of grant programs, innovation incentives, and job creation and training, we can not only ensure a cleaner future, but also more jobs, and a stronger, more competitive economy.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY
OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, I wholeheartedly agree with your statement that “now is the time to finally address major inequities” that have led to decades of disinvestment. For decades, my district has been fighting to complete a 9.5-mile rail project, known as the North Corridor, that will connect Florida’s two largest counties, Miami-Dade and Broward, and facilitate access to economic opportunities. Last year, Miami Gardens Mayor, Oliver Gilbert, testified before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee about this project, which is part of the county’s SMART Plan. We have been working tirelessly to complete this project. This is by far the most consequential transportation project in South Florida. I’d appreciate your commitment to work with me and stakeholders to finally get the North Corridor project over the finish line. Do I have your commitment?

ANSWER. Yes, you have my commitment that the Department will work with local stakeholders as they work to advance the project. We must also foster an inclusive process that allows our partners to move as expeditiously as possible in safely delivering infrastructure investments.

Question 2. Mr. Secretary, as chair of the Florida Ports Caucus, I'm very concerned that ships are not sailing, which means people are not working. The majority of those impacted are independent business owners or individuals employed by small- to medium-sized businesses—including travel agents, taxi drivers, port employees, baggage handlers, and longshoremen, as well as airline, hotel, and restaurant workers. Florida's ports, like PortMiami, are hemorrhaging jobs. With guidance uncertainty, cruise ships are moving to the Caribbean, causing genuine concern in my district about potential long-term job losses. We need guidelines on how to set sail safely and get our union workers back on the job. At a recent Senate hearing, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky stated that the Department of Transportation was involved in developing these guidelines. Do you have any insight for this committee on the updated guidelines to the Conditional Sailing Order to ensure that we can fully reopen our Seaports safely this summer to restore jobs?

ANSWER. The Department appreciates the close working relationship that we have with the CDC, and its role during the pandemic. That collaboration included the opportunity for DOT team members to provide the industry's feedback directly to the CDC to help inform development of its Conditional Sail Order—which was phased out in early 2022—Ultimately, Federal oversight of maritime safety is led by the USCG, and public health by the HHS. Nevertheless, DOT recognizes the vital benefits that travel and tourism, including the cruise industry, have on local economies and jobs. DOT will continue to work with our Federal partners and all other stakeholders to support the safe resumption of cruises.

Question 3. Mr. Secretary, one of the most exciting projects in my district and the state of Florida is Brightline, the first privately owned and operated high-speed rail system in the U.S. in more than 100 years. Later this year, the system will be up and running between Miami and West Palm Beach after shutting down because of COVID. In 2023, it will connect to Orlando and then later to Tampa. How do you intend to support projects like Brightline, which are implemented with private-sector investment, through the environmental approval process?

ANSWER. It is vitally important to partner with the private sector and leverage private sector dollars as we implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We must foster an inclusive process that allows our partners to move as expeditiously as possible in safely delivering infrastructure investments such as Brightline. In doing so, we also want to ensure we are good stewards of our environment and other important public resources.

Question 4. Mr. Secretary, I was pleased to read that about your commitment to addressing transportation inequities in your testimony. Have you considered reinstating the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity that was disbanded by former President Donald Trump and leveraging the capacity of historically black colleges and universities by establishing additional transportation research centers on those campuses?

ANSWER. Equity is one of the Department's top priorities. On May 16, 2022, DOT published the notice of the re-establishment of the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity. Convening a group of DOT experts on equity in transportation is key to moving forward to embed equity throughout the Department and its programs and policies.

Question 5. Mr. Secretary, Miami's Overtown neighborhood was once a thriving African-American community. Unfortunately, in the 1960s two new highways—I-95 and I-395—went up in the middle of Overtown. Some 75 percent of the neighborhood's residents were displaced and, today, half the neighborhood's residents are living below the federal poverty line. What is your agency's plan to ensure that new infrastructure investment doesn't displace marginalized communities of color?

ANSWER. Historic investments in transportation infrastructure, especially highway construction, cut too many Americans off from opportunity, dividing and demolishing communities, and perpetuating economic and racial injustices. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes a new program that will reconnect neighborhoods cut off by historic infrastructure projects and ensure new projects increase opportunity, advance racial equity and environmental justice, and promote affordable access. We also launched the Department-wide Equity Task Force, which will ensure that advancing equity and economic inclusion is part of all our programs and policies. We are committed to charting the right course for the Department in this important area.

Question 6. Mr. Secretary, throughout the pandemic, transportation workers—bus drivers, flight attendants, port workers, and others—have faced physical, verbal, and health risks while helping to keep the economy moving. Even though vaccination rates across the country have been improving, there are still many workers still waiting for a vaccine despite a recommendation from the CDC that they be prioritized. How are you working to ensure that transportation workers are being vaccinated, provided adequate PPE, and protected while doing their jobs?

ANSWER. The Administration has acted swiftly to combat COVID-19, including issuing numerous Executive Orders aimed at protecting travelers and transportation providers while also reducing the spread of COVID-19. The Department's support has included implementing CDC's mask mandates for passengers and workers, close interagency collaboration to facilitate convenient, accessible vaccination opportunities for transportation workers, and frequent stakeholder engagement aimed at spreading awareness, encouragement, and best practices for the transportation community to get vaccinated as quickly as possible. DOT has also acted to protect workers from unruly passengers, through both interagency cooperation and instituting of a zero-tolerance approach allowing FAA to take immediate action, including increased civil fines, against passengers who threaten, assault, intimidate, or otherwise interfere with air crews during flights. I am fully committed to continuing to leverage the Department's resources in these ways to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department will continue to work with Congress, the Administration, and transportation stakeholders to ensure that to the country's essential workers, travelers, and goods are all able to move safely as we continue to respond to and recover from COVID-19.

Question 7. Mr. Secretary, South Florida is on the frontline of climate change, especially when it comes to flooding. Many areas in my district, including Opa-Locka and Miami Shores, have been plagued by increased flooding, which damages homes and is a public health risk due to sewage leakage into the flood waters. In your testimony, you mentioned that we "face an imperative to create resilient infrastructure." What is the administration's plan to prioritize empowering local communities to address flooding and other weather-related challenges?

ANSWER. Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and must be a major part of solving the climate crisis. We have to be sure all aspects of our transportation system are resilient in a world that will see more powerful weather disasters. Every dollar we spend rebuilding infrastructure damaged by fires, floods, and other disasters is a dollar that we cannot spend improving our infrastructure.

The Administration is working with communities across the country to assess vulnerabilities to flooding and weather-related risks and identify opportunities to incorporate resilience into our infrastructure systems. We must do what we can now to address existing challenges, as well as plan for a more resilient future. When it comes to flooding and our roadways, the Department is developing tools, providing technical assistance to States and metropolitan areas, funding pilot projects, and facilitating information exchange among local transportation agencies. The Department serves as a resource to transportation agencies and provides options on the many ways they can build resilience into the planning, construction, and operation of transportation projects. As we utilize the new resources provided through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are continuing to partner with Federal, state, and local agencies on the shared goal of a transportation system that provides safe mobility under current and future climate conditions, supporting local economies and quality of life.

Question 8. Mr. Secretary, there is a significant underrepresentation of minority-owned firms that struggle to compete for government contracts. I am working with your staff to identify resources to help a minority-owned aviation contractor in my district, Aeromarine. What are your plans to ensure that minority-owned entities receive a fair share of federal contracts?

ANSWER. A focus on equity is essential to fulfilling our mission at the Department and to everything we do to serve the American people today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. DOT launched the Department-wide Equity Task Force, which will ensure that advancing equity and economic inclusion is part of all our programs and policies.

As a central part of that effort, the Department is committed to helping small and minority-owned businesses compete for government contracts, which are increasing with the historic opportunities provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. DOT is continuing to provide the appropriate stewardship and oversight of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. The DBE program applies to Federally assisted contracts issued by recipients of DOT, including financial assistance from

FHWA, FAA, and FTA. Moreover, the DBE program was established to ensure non-discrimination in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts and to help remove barriers to participation of DBEs, including minority- and women-owned firms. The DBE program supports states in developing and providing training and technical assistance to DBE firms to improve their business practices, overcome barriers to success, and facilitate the firms' development into viable, self-sufficient organizations. The Department will continue to ensure that DBEs are aware of and benefit from the opportunities created by the DBE program.

Question 9. Mr. Secretary, as chair of the Florida Ports Caucus, I am deeply concerned about COVID's devastating impact on port workers, including the longshoremen. Without direct funding from the federal government and the protracted closure of the cruise industry, our ports are hemorrhaging jobs and people are suffering. How are you working to provide relief to our nation's port workers?

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) makes a historic and overdue investment in our roads, bridges, rail, airports, transit systems, and ports. The BIL will ensure that these investments produce good-quality jobs with strong labor standards, prevailing wages, and a free and fair choice to join a union and bargain collectively. These investments will advance racial equity by providing better jobs and better transportation options to underserved communities.

The Department has been working throughout the pandemic with stakeholders including longshore unions, terminal operators, and port authorities to minimize the effects COVID-19 has had on port workers. In addition, the Administration released a Port Action Plan to address the ongoing supply chain issues at our nation's ports.

Our port and intermodal infrastructure-related programs, such as the Port Infrastructure Development Program and Marine Highway Program create jobs and make our economy more resilient and sustainable. Since the establishment of grant programs that support ports of all kinds, ports in Florida have received more than \$170 million for 10 grant awards to six ports within the State.

Question 10. Mr. Secretary, sustainability is vitally important in our future transportation needs. Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava recently announced plans to fund a shore power hookup at the Port of Miami. Shore power enables ships to plug into the local electrical grid while in port instead of idling their engines, which drastically reduces air emissions. There have been numerous environmental concerns when it comes to shipping. How can the department best support the expansion of this technology to ports across the country?

ANSWER. Global maritime-based trade, our U.S. flagged fleet, and our U.S. ports are critical to rebuilding and sustaining a flourishing American economy. They will also serve as important elements in the Administration's efforts to address transportation-related air quality and equity concerns. The BIL will provide additional funding in inland waterways, coastal ports, land ports of entry, and ferries, which are all essential to our nation's freight. This includes funding to help mitigate the cumulative impacts of air pollution on neighborhoods near ports, which are often communities of color. These investments will position the United States as a global leader in clean freight and aviation.

Question 11. Mr. Secretary, Miami is one of the most congested metropolitan areas in the world and the congestion costs the region billions of dollars. Some constituents have told me that they spend up to four hours commuting to and from work daily. City of Miami Mayor, Francis Suarez, recently floated an idea to construct an underground tunnel to alleviate the congestion. How do you plan to support innovative solutions to congestion?

ANSWER. These kinds of long commutes are unacceptable and have a significant impact on peoples' lives and families. This is why I feel so strongly about accelerating transformative investments in infrastructure that help people get where they need to go to efficiently and affordably, regardless of where they choose to live. The BIL will help modernize our infrastructure, investing in a safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system. The BIL also contains dedicated funding to support ambitious projects that have tangible benefits to the regional or national economy but are too large or complex for existing funding programs. There are many innovative transportation solutions and technologies, and it is important to make sure that transportation innovation can work for all Americans.

Question 12. Mr. Secretary, as a result of Miami's congestion and traffic, there have been many fatalities due to vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian collisions. The deadliest stretch of I-95 runs through my district. Often, these incidents disproportionately occur in underserved communities that do not have the same level of safety features as wealthier neighborhoods. What is the department's plan to ad-

dress these issues and to provide critical safety features to decrease road congestion and fatalities?

ANSWER. Safety is the Department's top priority. We have a crisis on our nation's roadways, especially in underserved communities, and we are taking steps to reverse these trends. To address this crisis, the Department recently released its National Roadway Safety Strategy, which uses a "Safe System Approach" to help ensure safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, and safe road users. This approach does not accept the current high toll of traffic crashes as inevitable, and instead sees it as preventable. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is an important part of the solution. It provides additional resources to support safety countermeasures, with particular attention devoted to underserved areas, and we will work with Federal-aid recipients to help them address their most pressing safety needs.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. MARK DESAULNIER TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Our economy is evolving away from fossil fuels to cleaner, renewable energy, and the coronavirus pandemic jump-started that process. COVID-19 travel restrictions and far fewer commuters during the pandemic have caused a major decrease in fossil fuel consumption—even the industry has been forced to consider diversifying its business model. We have seen these effects in Contra Costa County, California, home to four fossil fuel refineries. Because of this evolution away from fossil fuels, I have been working on an energy transition initiative to ensure America's fossil fuel workforce is not left behind. What is the Secretary's position on the transition away from fossil fuels and, in his view, how do we protect these workers?

ANSWER. The historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is helping provide high quality transportation jobs here in America. We need millions of construction, manufacturing, engineering, and skilled-trades workers to build a new American infrastructure and clean energy economy. These jobs will create opportunities for young people and for older workers shifting to new professions, and for people from all backgrounds and communities.

Question 2. Commuter and high-speed rail can help drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and efficiently connect people to jobs, health care, and other essential services. Mega-commutes have become common place across the U.S. and particularly in the Bay Area. Building out efficient commuter and high-speed rail and coordinating public transportation services within regions is key to a world-class, interconnected rail network. In addition, we must ensure that high-speed rail is done right by constructing the rail in corridors where we need it most. What are the Secretary's thoughts on how we build a world-class rail network that focuses on regional coordination? In addition, how do we ensure proper project management of these mega-rail projects so they are built in optimal areas?

ANSWER. Successful economies demand safe, efficient and effective transportation systems. For more than 50 years, our government invested hundreds of billions of dollars in the development of the Interstate highway and aviation systems, but minimal amounts in rail. Many other countries have shown us that if passenger rail is done well, it can create tremendous transportation, economic, environmental, and safety benefits.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$66 billion in advanced appropriations and authorizes an additional \$36 billion in funding to the Federal Railroad Administration to support the restoration, development, and expansion of passenger rail service across the country. The newly created Corridor Identification and Development program will provide states, communities and other stakeholders a formal process that will help facilitate the development of intercity passenger rail corridors. This will jumpstart the rail investments our nation needs to expand on current successes and seed further growth in American rail.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. SALUD O. CARBAJAL TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. International shipping is a massive global polluter—largely as a result of the carbon intensive nature of ships' fossil fueled engines. Nearly 40% of Americans live within 3 miles of a port. The majority of America's port communities are working class and lower income communities of color that have long demanded life-saving policy interventions to end ship pollution.

After two centuries of reliance on fossil fuels, the shipping industry is pursuing a rapid transition to low/zero emission propulsion—centered on green, hydrogen-based fuels, fuel cell technologies, and battery power.

How is the Department of Transportation preparing America's ports for a new era of low/zero-emission shipping, and what support do you need from Congress towards these ends?

ANSWER. Our U.S. ports are critical to a strong American economy. We must address the air pollution in and around our port communities that threatens the health and well-being of nearby residents. The confluence of transportation modes at these points requires a sustained effort to support port, terminal and vessel energy efficiency and reduce emissions. It also requires expanded multi-modal approaches to reduce carbon emissions from the maritime sector and support alternative energy technologies and fuels.

In order to reach our national goals, we must tackle the emissions and increase energy efficiency within the domestic and global maritime industries. In addition, we are working with our colleagues across the federal government to advance these maritime fuel and vessel technologies. There are exciting developments in both the public and private sectors that demonstrate it will be possible for us to productively work to achieve these goals. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing additional funding to address the needs of coastal ports, inland waterways land ports of entry, and ferries, to ensure we maintain our competitive edge, modernize systems that have suffered decades of disinvestment, and do so in a way that protects the surrounding communities.

Question 2. The technology for producing hydrogen is proven. The problem is that hydrogen production and equipment is estimated to be 30–50% more costly than infrastructure used to produce LNG. Supporting programs that accelerate hydrogen production will add U.S. jobs and create equivalent private capital investment. I would appreciate hearing your views on hydrogen production and how your department can play a role to accelerate hydrogen production and implementation.

ANSWER. Renewable hydrogen production will play a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. There are many exciting opportunities in this area. Announced at President Biden's Leaders Summit on Climate, the Administration's 2030 greenhouse gas pollution reduction target specifically calls for the prioritization of clean hydrogen and recognizes the need to create good paying jobs through expanded clean hydrogen production, delivery, storage, and end use.

Addressing maritime-related emission reductions and energy efficiency challenges are a DOT priority. The Maritime Administration has been working closely with the Department of Energy to evaluate hydrogen applications in the maritime sector. For example, MARAD's Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance (META) Program has led efforts looking at feasibility of fuel cell applications for both vessels and shore-based equipment.

Hydrogen is one of many alternative fuel or energy sources that may assist in moving the sector towards emissions reduction and ultimately decarbonization. The Department is looking at how existing programs could be used to further support investments in energy-related facilities at or near ports.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. GREG STANTON TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. As we craft infrastructure legislation, I have been working to include polices that increase planning to ensure we have sustainable access to construction materials. Stone, sand, and gravel are key materials needed to build infrastructure, and they are imperative to expanding our highways, building new transit networks, electric vehicle stations and any public works project. My state of Arizona has taken the lead in executing smart planning that ensures communities have access to aggregates which is a key factor in reducing emissions, lessening environmental impacts, and extending taxpayer dollars as we build infrastructure.

Will you commit to working with me on implementing better federal planning, engaging with local governments, tribes, and stakeholders, to ensure we have more sustainable access to construction materials?

ANSWER. I will commit to working with you and other stakeholders to ensure that we have more access to sustainable construction materials. FHWA is doing considerable work to improve the sustainability of highway infrastructure materials through research at the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center and the Sustainable Pavements Program.

Question 2. The City of Phoenix ranks third in the nation for roadway fatalities. The city is working to reverse this alarming trend, but it often lacks the resources to undertake necessary safety projects. Efforts by cities to secure federal funds for safety projects has been challenging since many states do not suballocate funds from

the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to the local level to implement traffic safety projects.

What options are available to direct more federal resources to support cities working to address traffic-related injuries and fatalities?

ANSWER. We must address the crisis on our nation's roadways. Safety will always remain the number one priority of the Department and we recently released our National Roadway Safety Strategy to help communities ensure safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, and safe road users. This safe system approach engages all stakeholders and is similar to the airline industry's embrace of safety management systems that resulted in the dramatic decline in air fatalities in the 1990s.

We recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach for America's communities when it comes to safe street design and are providing local communities with the assistance to implement safety practices, while providing the flexibility to adjust to local conditions.

Cities are eligible applicants under the INFRA and RAISE discretionary grant programs, for which safety-related projects are eligible. As an example, the City of Phoenix was selected for a BUILD 20 grant for the 35th Avenue Safety Corridor project. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding is helping improve road safety for all users, including increases to existing safety programs and a new Safe Streets for All program to reduce crashes and fatalities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.

Working through MPOs and with States, cities can also identify roadways as Critical Urban Freight Corridors to gain eligibility for the National Highway Freight Program funding, which is apportioned to States for a wide range of projects. Cities may also use federal planning (PL) funds sub-allocated to their metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for safety programs.

Question 3. The current COVID pandemic has generated new emphasis on frequent cleanings, wearing masks, and physical distancing.

- a. Will cleaning, distancing, and other standards be established by the DOT/FAA for airports?
- b. If so, will supporting grant funds be developed, similar to the roll-out of new security infrastructure funding following 9/11?

ANSWER to a. & b. FAA has not established specific spatial standards for airports, nor does the FAA have regulatory authority over cleaning protocols. However, the FAA has imposed a grant condition that airports receiving Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) funds implement CDC and TSA requirements when in effect.

The Department has also led interagency work in close coordination with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security and other federal partners to provide guidance and recommendations to airports and airlines on myriad public health risk reductions measures, including cleaning protocols.

All eligible airport sponsors receiving COVID-relief airport grants can use these funds to clean, sanitize, and otherwise operate its airports. These grant funds are also available to fund terminal projects that combat the spread of pathogens. As such, airports can use these funds to increase social distancing in eligible areas and other projects to combat disease, such as create spaces for health screening, temporary isolation, or upgrade ventilation systems.

Question 4. Airports sell private activity bonds to finance airports. If the purchaser of those bonds must pay a higher interest rate on their earnings, they want a greater interest rate on the bonds. A greater interest rate means the airport must pay more on the bond at maturity which costs money. If the alternative minimum tax on these bonds was eliminated, airports could sell bonds (borrow) more cheaply and stretch their limited dollars.

Does the Administration support eliminating the alternative minimum tax on private activity bond interest proceeds?

ANSWER. Currently, DOT's Private Activity Bond (PAB) authority does not extend to airports. PABs do offer an appealing, lower cost means of financing projects, while at the same time encouraging private sector participation, and we look forward to working with Congress to ensure communities have access to a range of low-cost infrastructure financing.

Question 5. I have been concerned that very few tribal nations have been successful in securing BUILD grants. Many tribal governments feel that they are being left out of the BUILD grant program even though their reservations are important components to the local, state, and regional economies and communities. For 2018 awards, 59 tribal applications were submitted, but only two received awards. In

2019, 13 tribal applications were submitted and only one received an award. And in 2020, two tribal projects received an award.

Tribal reservations often encompass tribal, interstate, state, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and county roads that also serve non-tribal communities. Tribal governments have expressed the need to widen highways and develop off-ramps and interchanges to better access their lands. In some instances, this lack of infrastructure is significantly hindering tribal economic development. This is the case even in places where the tribal governments have become one of the largest employers in the region, sometimes employing several thousand non-tribal citizens. In addition, these types of large-scale, multi-jurisdictional projects are essential to provide safe travel on, and through, tribal lands. According to the CDC, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives aged 1 to 44, with Arizona listed as one of the top five states for motor-vehicle related deaths, along with Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana.

While tribal governments have been encouraged to increase their coordination with the local municipalities and state governments in order to submit grant applications that clearly show a regional impact with support from multiple jurisdictions, it is important for the Department to recognize the inherent challenges and limitations tribal nations have in submitting competitive applications.

- a. What steps will the Department take to better assist tribal nations in submitting competitive applications for BUILD grants?
- b. Would the Department support a tribal set-aside within the BUILD program to provide a more level playing field for tribal nations to compete for these funds?

ANSWER to a. & b. The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program (formerly BUILD grants) provides eligibility to a diverse array of public entities, including Tribal governments. To provide outreach to eligible applicants, DOT offered a webinar on how to apply for RAISE specifically for Tribal and rural applicants to directly answer questions about the application and evaluation process. Additionally, the NOFOs for DOT's Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and RAISE programs included for the first time criteria focused on addressing inequity. DOT also added a new webinar focused on applying to RAISE planning grants, which can address critical planning gaps for tribal communities. Both the Office of Tribal Affairs and ROUTES are actively promoting these webinars to their partners.

Under the RAISE grant program, DOT maintains its statutory responsibility to ensure an equitable geographic distribution of funds, an appropriate balance in addressing the needs of urban and rural areas, including Tribal areas, and the investment in a variety of transportation modes.

Question 6. In the final rule for the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program issued last year, the Department declined to establish an Office of Self-Governance and a Self-Governance Advisory Committee. H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act would establish an Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs and an Office of Tribal Government Affairs at the Department of Transportation to oversee administration of the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program.

- a. Does the Department support the establishment of an Office of Tribal Government Affairs to administer the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program and coordinate the Department efforts to provide outreach to underserved Tribal communities to address transportation safety challenges and transportation barriers faced by Tribes to access markets and economic opportunities?

ANSWER. The Department fully supports any legislative action to advance the principles of Self-Determination and Self-Governance for Indian Tribes in the Department's programs and assist Tribes in meeting transportation safety challenges and removing transportation barriers to economic opportunities. Currently, the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program is administered within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs and is headed by Arlando Teller, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs with assistance from a dedicated career team. In addition, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) includes the creation of an Office of Tribal Government Affairs and requires the appointment of an Assistant Secretary of Tribal Government Affairs.

- b. What obstacles prevent the Department from establishing a Self-Governance Advisory Committee, similar to those at the Department of the Interior and the Department of Health, to assist the Department implement the many USDOT programs benefitting Tribes?
- c. Does the Department view such a committee as saving federal funds in the long term by highlighting best practices among Tribes, troubleshooting issues early, and ensuring that Tribes remain good stewards of taxpayer funds?

ANSWER to b. & c. Congress, by enacting Section 1121 of the FAST Act—which authorized the TTSGP—did not require the creation of a Self-Governance Advisory Committee for the TTSGP. The Department acknowledges that advisory committees can facilitate the development of administrative, oversight, and cost saving ideas and approaches that could more effectively carry out the goals and objectives of a Federal program.

Question 7. Communities advancing major federal infrastructure projects have encountered challenges in working with the railroads when those the projects intersect with the freight rail network. While there is a need to mitigate the impact of federal infrastructure projects on the railroad's operations, there have been times when the cost and scale of the mitigation and economic compensation being sought by the railroads are disproportionate to the impact on the railroad's operation and does not consider the benefits the railroad may accrue from the project. In some cases, the mitigation is simply cost prohibitive to the local community, jeopardizing the viability of the entire infrastructure project.

What role can USDOT/FRA play in assisting communities and the railroads reach agreement on appropriate mitigation measures on federal infrastructure projects that impact the freight rail network and the operations of a railroad to keep these projects viable?

ANSWER. It is vital that we help communities find consensus with railroads on projects that have the potential to deliver broad-based benefits. Project sponsors must coordinate closely with railroads throughout the planning and development process, as in many cases the infrastructure asset being improved, or altered in some way, is owned by the railroad. This coordination is essential to ensuring that the objectives of the Federal investment are met with minimal disruption, but also serves to highlight the benefits that the asset owner will realize upon completion. In such cases, FRA encourages project sponsors to engage railroads and any other stakeholders early in the project development process, which we have seen result in a more collaborative relationship that helps foster beneficial project outcomes for the community and the railroad.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. SHARICE DAVIDS TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. I, along with my colleague aviation subcommittee ranking member Garret Graves, have introduced legislation to create a working group at DOT to ensure engagement and leadership in the advanced air mobility space and look forward to working with you and the Administration should it pass. I would appreciate your thoughts on integrating advanced air mobility concepts into the transportation and mobility network and would ask how you are prioritizing this work within the Department?

ANSWER. The first passenger-carrying Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft are currently working their way through FAA certification. The FAA has been consistently collaborating with NASA to develop an AAM Concept of Operations, and participating in demonstration projects that are making clear how AAM could fundamentally change the air transportation system as we know it. There is still a lot we need to learn to prepare for this, and not all of it involves the safety of the aircraft itself.

The first AAM operations are projected to be piloted, use traditional air traffic management and travel along established helicopter routes. That will quickly ramp up to require addressing complex navigation systems, flight coordination, passenger security questions, autonomous operation questions, standards for landing platforms, and answering who decides where they are placed, how they are funded and operated, and how they accommodate multiple or a single operator's aircraft. We are actively working with intergovernmental partners, industry, and local planners to better understand this technology and its implications. DOT will commit to sharing our progress in this field as it develops.

Question 2. Secretary Buttigieg, I share your view that we face a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make long-overdue investments in our nation's transportation system. As part of opportunity, there is an urgent need to modernize our nation's aging safety critical aviation infrastructure. It has been more than 40 years since our country made a significant investment in these systems, and now much of that equipment is well beyond its intended service life. Replacing and modernizing this infrastructure will create U.S. jobs, save the FAA millions of dollars annually, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and improve safety.

As the Administration constructs its infrastructure proposal, will you consider the critical need to modernize our ground-based aviation infrastructure as priorities for funding and policy reforms?

ANSWER. The FY 2023 Discretionary Budget fully supports the FAA’s operational needs, while ensuring we can continue to invest in safety and innovation. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$25 billion to improve airports and National Airspace System assets—which combined with investments across modes will help modernize our transportation system.

The FY 2023 Discretionary Budget also supports safety by making necessary investments in air traffic control facilities. These facilities are in many cases decades old and in need of modernization and replacement to ensure safe and efficient operations.

Question 3. Hyperloop is an exciting new mode of transportation that is 100 percent electric with zero direct carbon emissions. With the Biden Administration’s focus on climate change and the role the Department of Transportation will play in advancing our nation’s climate policy, what steps do you plan to take to help develop new modes of transportation that support these efforts, like hyperloop? How will the Biden-Harris Administration’s Build Back Better infrastructure plan support the development of hyperloop technology?

ANSWER. There are many innovations taking place in transportation technology, and it’s important that the Department ensures that new technologies can work for all Americans, while always prioritizing safety. The Department is a partner for innovators, travelers, and communities alike. These innovative projects now have more funding opportunities available through BIL programs, such as eligibilities for research and development activities through FRA’s expanded Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety and Improvements (CRISI) grant program.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. JESÚS G. “CHUY” GARCÍA TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG,
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Secretary Buttigieg, In your February 25 joint statement with Transport Canada on the nexus between transportation and climate change, you stated, “We intend to advance the development and deployment of high integrity sustainable aviation fuels.” The development of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) has made great strides, and the big hurdle now for SAF is producing SAF in quantities that will have a significant impact in reducing carbon levels in the hard to decarbonize aviation sector. SAF is considered the most cost effective, reliable and ready to deploy option for decarbonizing aviation. Fred Smith, the Chairman of Fed Ex, in testimony last week, indicated current efforts to replace carbon-based jet fuels are limited because of costs associated with sustainable aircraft fuels.

- a. Do you believe federal government incentives like a SAF blender’s tax credit (BTC) is a solution to scale up the industry?
- b. Would the blenders tax credit proposal of \$1.50/gal. or more for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) that achieve a 50% reduction in GHG, bring the cost of SAF close to parity with regular jet fuel?

ANSWER to a. & b. Sustainable aviation fuels offer the best ongoing opportunity to reduce emissions from the aviation sector, given the limitations and energy density of battery technology today for aviation uses. Adequately addressing the cost disparity of the renewable fuels market and the existing fossil fuel supply of aviation fuel will be critical to achieving wide-spread production and deployment, spurring job creation in agriculture, refining, construction and logistics throughout the nation, and to meeting U.S. aviation climate commitments, including those made at the International Civil Aviation Organization and the Paris Agreement. In September 2021, several Federal agencies, including DOT, DOE and USDA, came together to support the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Grand Challenge, and this collaboration will jointly leverage existing authorities and resources to promote sustainable fuel production.

Question 2. In the near future, I will be introducing legislation that includes provisions that will improve mobility, reduce congestion, and lower vehicle emissions across the U.S. through the use of transportation demand management (TDM)—all priorities if we want a practical approach to federal surface transportation policy while also ensuring equity and sustainability. The MORE through TDM Act will bring TDM to state and local planning decisions while also providing an important new funding program that will support impactful TDM strategies like commuter benefits programs (like you implemented while Mayor) and projects that improve the equitable flow of people and goods within the existing national highway network.

- a. How might the US DOT work to expand the utilization of transportation demand management (TDM) through its existing authorities?

ANSWER. Certainly, demand management can be an important component of a transportation program in congested areas. Existing authorities, such as those related to high-occupancy vehicle lanes (23 U.S.C. 166) and value pricing (Act (ISTEA) § 1012(b), as amended) provide pathways to a community's congestion-related demand management approaches. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (23 U.S.C. 149) provides funds that support TDM programs and projects. Discretionary grant programs may provide additional avenues for implementing demand management.

- b. Is TDM a policy area where we could work together to craft lower cost policy solutions that have real impacts on reducing greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions while bringing efficiencies that lower congestion levels to our national transportation system?

ANSWER. FHWA developed a new feature for its Freight Mobility Trends Analysis Tool to help users see the estimated emissions on the Nation's highways. This enhancement—which features information on the time and cost of bottlenecks across the nation—is available to the public. This information can be useful to States and other public-sector agencies as they look at multimodal solutions to congestion and GHG emissions reduction.

- c. As the country begins to emerge from the pandemic, how might US DOT embrace transportation demand management strategies to ensure commuters have viable transportation options available to them?

ANSWER. Investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) are helping provide more options for people to get where they need to go. At the Department, we are raising awareness of opportunities for communities to pursue a wide range of strategies that best address the challenges facing their residents.

Question 3. I have heard concerns from small business engineering companies in my district about a problematic regulatory requirement that may inhibit their ability to recover economically. Apparently firms that received PPP loans and qualify for loan forgiveness must credit back to the government some or all of that loan, under an interpretation of federal acquisition rules. These small businesses are worried that State DOTs and local transit agencies will apply this credit to reduce their billing rates, essentially eliminating the benefit of the loan and in some cases leaving them worse off.

I encourage the Department of Transportation to develop implementation guidance that limits the scope and impact of this rule as much as possible, and to work with the affected industries to provide feedback to the department. Will the Department of Transportation commit to working to help ensure small businesses can fully utilize their PPP loans?

ANSWER. The Department worked with small businesses to help them fully utilize their PPP loans while ensuring that contractors are not charging the Federal government for services that were previously paid for by forgiven PPP loans. FHWA worked carefully to provide guidance, which was released on March 24, 2021, that clarifies treatment of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans received by consultants providing architectural and engineering (A&E) services under Federal-aid or Federal lands highway program funded contracts. FHWA's guidance limits the application of the credit to Federal-aid highway program funded contracts to amounts necessary to ensure that the company does not receive a windfall by receiving loan forgiveness from the Small Business Administration and subsequently being reimbursed by FHWA, which would be contrary to governmentwide requirements.

The fundamental issue at hand was ensuring that contractors are not able to "double dip" by receiving forgiven PPP loans while at the same time charging government for those same services. For this reason, FHWA's guidance limits the amount of credit recovery to only the portion of forgiven loan proceeds which are allocable to the Federal-aid highway program funded contract and nothing more. FHWA will continue to actively participate in regular meetings with representatives of State DOTs, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and other members of the engineering community to address questions or concerns on Federal guidance to ensure consistent implementation.

Question 4. Autonomous vehicles are responsible for at least one crash a day on average. After Congress mandated that the DOT produce a plan to proactively regulate this technology, the previous administration proposed a plan to cheerlead the industry, rather than address any of the safety, security, or labor concerns created by this technology. This has led to a free-for-all across the country with thousands of these unregulated vehicles on our streets.

How do you plan to bring autonomous vehicles back into compliance with our existing regulations and prevent widespread job loss in the transportation industry as this technology is deployed?

ANSWER. The Department is committed to supporting the safe development, testing and deployment of automated vehicle (AV) technology in a way that reflects our priorities, including safety, equity and fostering good-paying jobs. All vehicles for public sale must be in compliance with existing National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) regulations and test protocols; and are subject to NHTSA defect and recall authorities. NHTSA, with our National Transportation Safety Board partners, is actively investigating crashes involving vehicles that claim to be “self-driving.”

Because these new driving automation technologies present unique risks, NHTSA is evaluating whether the manufacturers of these vehicles (including manufacturers of prototype vehicles and equipment) are meeting their statutory obligations to ensure that their vehicles and equipment are free of defects that pose an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety. To enable timely notification of crashes and incidents that happen on public roads, NHTSA issued a Standing General Order that requires manufacturers and operators of Automated Driving Systems (ADS) and SAE Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) equipped vehicles to report crashes to the agency. This action enables NHTSA to fulfill its mission of keeping Americans safe on the roadways and providing transparency to the public, even as the technology deployed on the nation’s roads continues to evolve.

The Department also recently released innovation principles and continues to move forward on standing up and staffing the Highly Automated Systems Safety Center of Excellence, to provide a core expertise to support assessment of automation applications across all modes of transportation, that will help us explore key questions such as labor, safety, and environmental impacts. In addition, the Department invests in the future of transportation through its University Transportation Centers Program, which awards and administers grants to consortia of colleges and universities across the United States. The UTC Program advances the state-of-the-art in transportation research and technology and develops the next generation of transportation professionals.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. JAKE AUCHINCLOSS TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. Mr. Secretary, people in my district, and in the Commonwealth of MA, whose livelihoods depend on the travel and tourism industry have been hit among the hardest financially by the pandemic. Following a devastating year for these families, thanks to innovation in vaccine development, we are finally able to begin taking postponed visits with family and friends in the US and abroad, and planning delayed vacations.

What this means for my constituents is plain and simple—when planes are flying, airlines are supporting jobs. But as we look to a hopeful future filled with opportunities for growth and innovation in aviation, we need to ensure that all US airlines have equal access to space—or slots—at airports around the world. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Recently, when a new entrant US airline applied to serve London Heathrow Airport, they were denied access by UK authorities. In fact, the available slots went to an airline that essentially hoarded them. So now the slots remain unused, not able to support any jobs in my district or any other for that matter.

To avoid this scenario in the future, and to support innovation and job growth in the airline industry, can I count on you to work with your counterparts at the UK’s Competition and Markets Authority—and other competition authorities—to address access for US carriers to Heathrow and other airports worldwide?

ANSWER. The Department maintains close working relationships with our counterparts in foreign jurisdictions, including both aeronautical authorities and also competition authorities that implement airport access remedies such as the ones you reference in the U.S.-London market. The Department will continue to work closely with our foreign partners to ensure U.S. carrier services are properly considered, that new entrant services are recognized as critical to enhancing competition, and that critical infrastructure is made available on non-discriminatory terms, consistent with international best practice as well as foreign partners’ obligation to the United States under relevant international agreements.

Question 2. Mr. Secretary, I have heard concerns from small business engineering companies in my district about a problematic regulatory requirement that may inhibit their ability to recover economically. Apparently small business contractors that received PPP loans and qualify for loan forgiveness must credit back to the gov-

ernment some or all of that loan, under an interpretation of federal acquisition rules. These small businesses, including many minority-owned and women-owned DBEs, are worried that State DOTs and local transit agencies will apply this credit to reduce their billing rates, essentially eliminating the benefit of the loan and in some cases leaving them worse off.

This is time sensitive, as State DOTs are crafting their own policies and procedures that could have harmful consequences for businesses that needed this assistance the most.

I understand the Department of Transportation has published implementation guidance in recent days. Will you commit to work with the affected stakeholders to limit the scope and impact of this credit policy as much as possible and ensure fair outcomes for our small business contractors?

ANSWER. The Department worked with small businesses to help them fully utilize their PPP loans while ensuring that contractors are not charging the Federal government for services that were previously paid for by forgiven PPP loans. FHWA worked carefully to provide guidance, which was released on March 24, 2021, that clarifies treatment of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans received by consultants providing architectural and engineering (A&E) services under Federal-aid or Federal lands highway program funded contracts. FHWA's guidance limits the application of the credit to Federal-aid highway program funded contracts to amounts necessary to ensure that the company does not receive a windfall by receiving loan forgiveness from the Small Business Administration and subsequently being reimbursed by FHWA, which would be contrary to governmentwide requirements.

The fundamental issue at hand was ensuring that contractors are not able to "double dip" by receiving forgiven PPP loans while at the same time charging the government for those same services. For this reason, FHWA's guidance limits the amount of credit recovery to only the portion of forgiven loan proceeds which are allocable to the Federal-aid highway program funded contract and nothing more. FHWA will continue to actively participate in regular meetings with representatives of State DOTs, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and other members of the engineering community to address questions or concerns on Federal guidance to ensure consistent implementation.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. CAROLYN BOURDEAUX TO HON. PETE BUTTIGIEG, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Question 1. What will USDOT do to coordinate planning for transitioning the power grid to prepare it for the increased use that will come with the electrification of transportation?

ANSWER. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) includes \$65 billion to support clean energy transmission and grid modernization. It will upgrade our power infrastructure, by building thousands of miles of new, resilient transmission lines to facilitate the expansion of renewables and clean energy, while lowering costs. And it will fund new programs to support the development, demonstration, and deployment of cutting-edge clean energy technologies to accelerate our transition to a zero-emission economy. While our Federal partners at the Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will lead this effort, DOT is helping prepare for the further electrification of transportation. Preparing for this energy future is vital to our economy, and will require a coordinated effort among all public and private sector stakeholders in the electric power generation, transmission, and distribution sector.

Question 2. How will USDOT help entities transition their bus and/or truck fleets to electric or alternative fuels including propane and methane gas?

ANSWER. FTA's Low or No Emissions competitive grant program provides funding to support the transition to low and no emission vehicles, and the BIL provides \$5.6 billion over five years. In addition, low and no emission vehicles are an eligible expense under FTA's Buses and Bus Facilities formula and competitive programs.

The Federal Highway Administration is also implementing new programs under the BIL to support the development of charging facilities and corridors.

Question 3. It is more expensive to build transit infrastructure in US than in other countries, what is USDOT doing to look into these cost issues and make sure that we use our transit dollars wisely?

ANSWER. DOT is committed to safeguarding Federal tax dollars and is aware that a complex mix of local and national economic factors have driven up the cost of major infrastructure projects in the United States. In 2020, FTA entered into a cooperative agreement with the Eno Center for Transportation to conduct research into the growing cost of transit projects, which will utilize comparisons with West-

ern European countries and Canada, as well as historical trends in transit project delivery. This research is now available (<https://projectdelivery.enotrans.org/>) and will help inform FTA's continued work in this area.

